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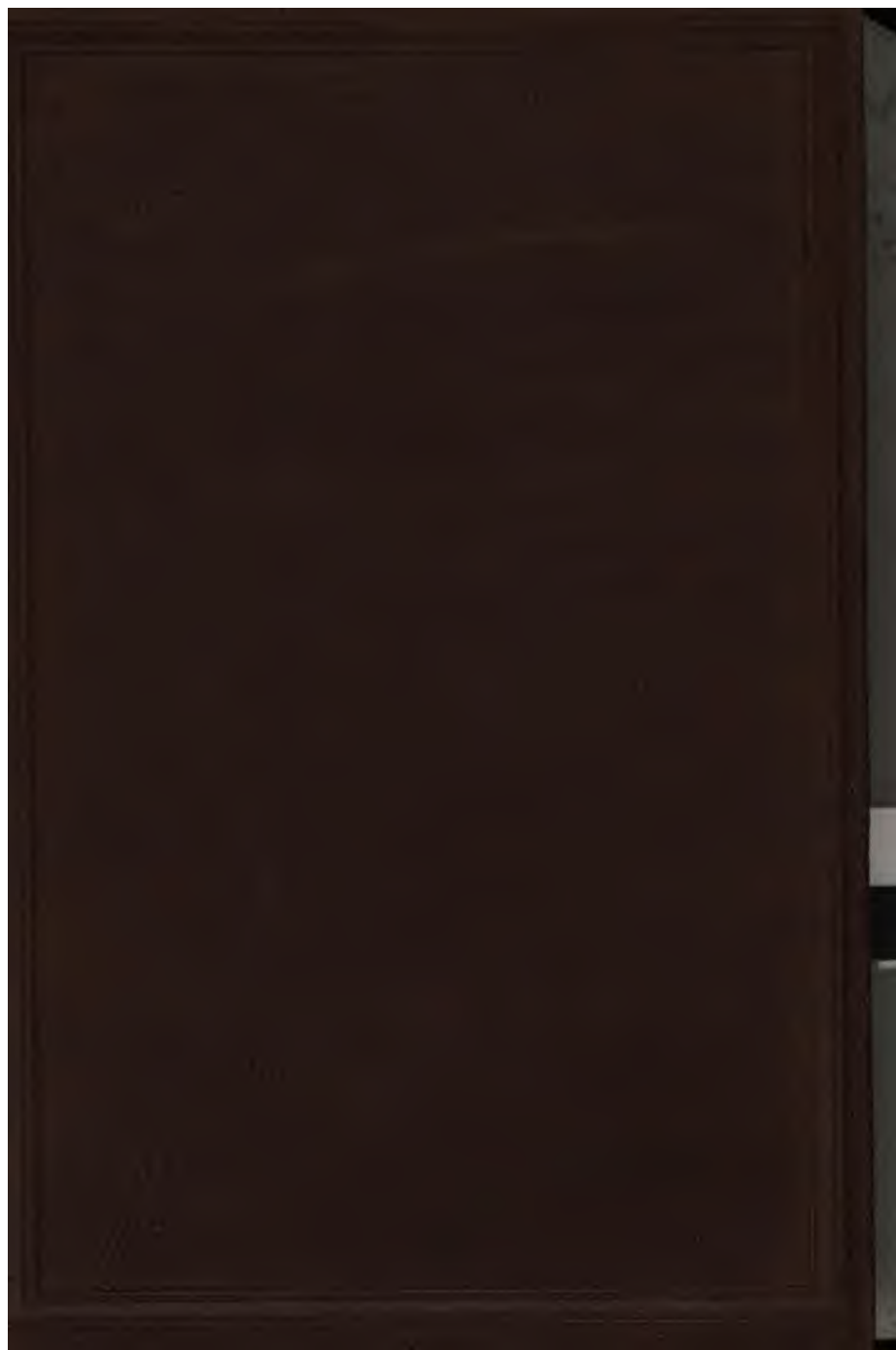
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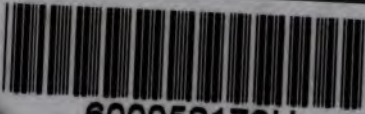
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the 'information' and 'communication' fields, and the 'information science' field.

The 'information science' field is the most recent of the three fields, and is the only one that has not been previously defined. It is the focus of the present study.

The 'information science' field is defined as the study of the processes of information creation, organisation, storage, retrieval, dissemination and use.

The 'information science' field is the only one of the three fields that is not a discipline in its own right.

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MEMOIR AND REMAINS

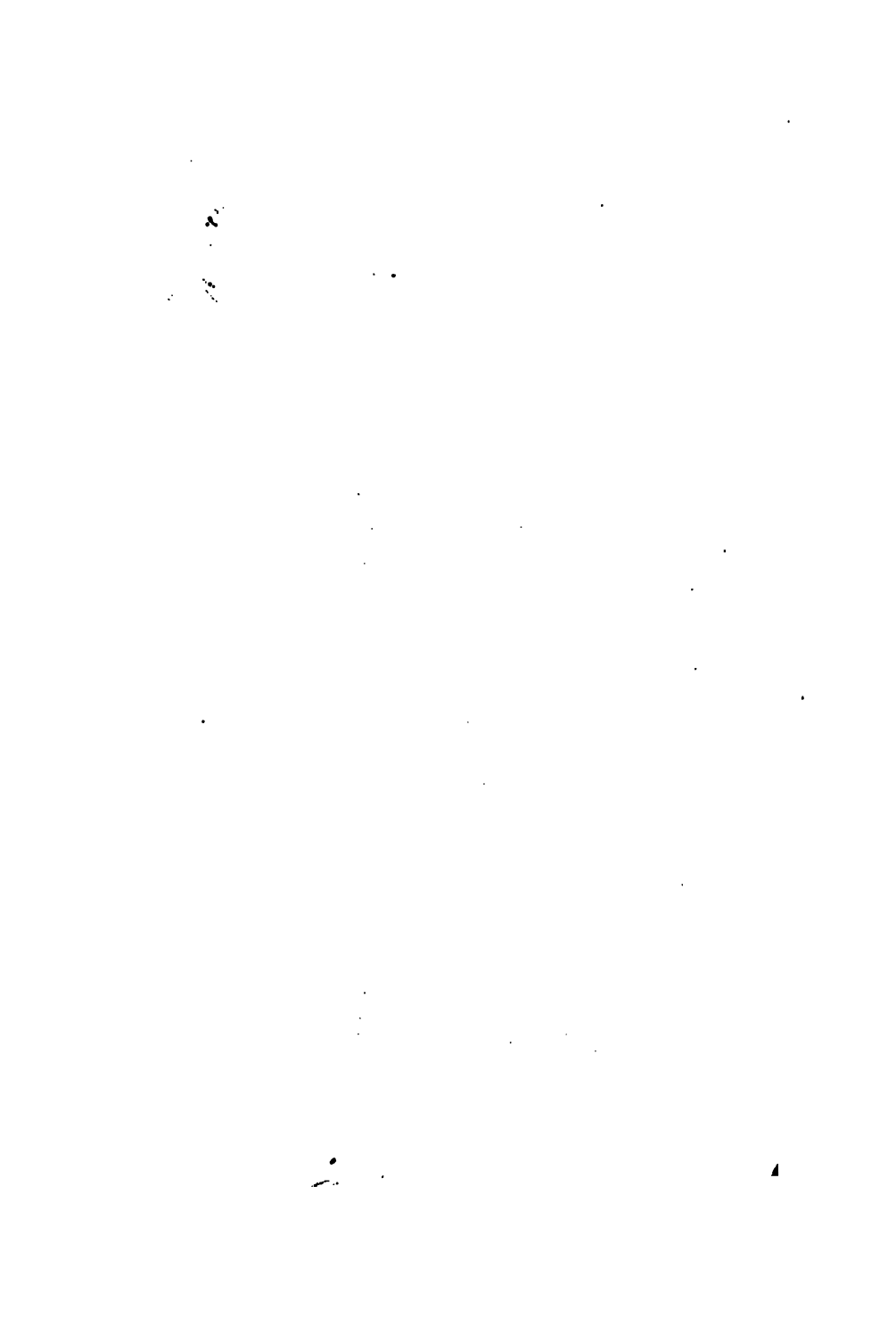
OF THE

REV. JAMES AITKEN.





Yours very affecly
James Little



1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the atom.

2. The second part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the molecule.

3. The third part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the crystal.

4. The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the liquid.

5. The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the gas.

6. The sixth part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the plasma.

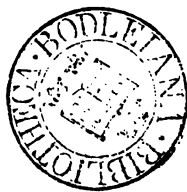
7. The seventh part of the paper is devoted to a discussion of the general principles of the theory of the structure of the solid.

MEMOIR AND REMAINS

OF THE

REV. JAMES AITKEN,

MINISTER OF ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, GLASGOW.



GLASGOW:

THOMAS MURRAY AND SON.

EDINBURGH: WILLIAM RITCHIE. LONDON: JAMES NISBET AND CO.

1867.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Memoir of Mr Aitken was drawn up by a near relative, who had the best opportunities of knowing the details of his life, and the best means of forming an estimate of his character and ministry. There was nothing remarkable about his history; but his character was one of singular loveliness, and his brief ministry was one of singular power.

The Letters are a small selection of his large correspondence. They give an insight into his daily life. Even the shortest notes he wrote breathed the spirit of that gentleness and ardent piety by which he was so eminently characterised.

The Sermons were very hurriedly written, amid the pressure of excessive work, and were never intended for publication. They afford but a faint idea of his preaching, as his power lay so much in extemporaneous address. But though his discourses, when read, may seem to some so different from his discourses when heard, it is believed that many, and

more especially the members of the congregations to which he ministered so faithfully, will be glad to have beside them a few remains of one who was so dearly loved by all who knew him, and who was so much honoured in his Master's service.

The little volume is sent forth with the earnest desire and prayer that God may use it for His glory.

R. S. HUTTON.

MANSE OF CAMBUSNETHAN,
April, 1867.

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MEMOIR.

THE writer of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews has given us a Scriptural warrant for dwelling on "the memory of the just," while in the first verse of the twelfth chapter he shows us the practical use we are to make of such meditations ; and surely it is profitable for those who are still struggling on in the Christian course to mark the steps by which one after another have reached the goal and joined the "cloud of witnesses." It is not too much to say that to few of that "glorious company" was it given on earth to tread more closely in the footsteps of the "Author and Finisher of our faith," more fervently to love Him, and more truly to delight in communion with Him, than to the Rev. James Aitken, from the time he joined the ranks of the true followers of the Lamb.

I.—BIRTH AND EDUCATION.

He was a native of Whithorn, in Wigtonshire, but

left it at a very early age. His parents having met with reverses of fortune, removed to Glasgow, whither he accompanied them, with the rest of their large family, of which he was the youngest. To the last he retained a singular affection for his birth-place; even in his last illness often talking with interest of the possibility of removing there for change.

God had endowed him with a singularly amiable disposition, so that even in early childhood his gentleness, and the patience with which he bore the little trials incident to his time of life were remarkable.

It was not the intention of his family that he should be educated for the church; but his own intense desire to be a minister of Christ overcame every difficulty, and led him to make exertions no doubt beyond his strength. During the whole time of his course at the University of Glasgow he maintained himself by teaching. The labour thus involved laid the seeds of that disease which brought his ministry to so early a close. Surely it is to prove the sincerity of His children that God so often allows what is undertaken for His own glory to issue in sufferings and death, and that they may more closely resemble Him, "who, for the joy

that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the "right hand of the throne of God."

In order to gain time for all he had to do, it was his custom to rise at four o'clock every morning, and, lighting his own fire, commence his studies. In after life, when talking of this period, he delighted in telling how much he owed to a beloved sister, who was the sharer of all his joys and sorrows. Being united to him not only by the ties of nature but of grace, she sympathised with him in all his cares, encouraged him in all his struggles, and attended to his bodily wants.

In 1851, his mother, to whom he was tenderly attached, fell asleep in Jesus; and about the same time his own health completely gave way, probably under the pressure of the bereavement, coupled with his hard work. It was no small trial to him, towards the close of this his most successful session at college, to be obliged to drop all study, at the desire of his medical attendant, and go off to the country. Thus early did the discipline commence which wrought and moulded his character into daily increasing conformity to the Father's will, fitting him to live *long* in a short time, according to one of his favourite axioms, that, men's lives ought not to be measured

by days, and months, and years, but by the amount of good they have done.

His health now compelling him to reside as much as possible in the country, he obtained at different times the situation of tutor in private families; and it was while acting in this capacity in the family of a clergyman in the Highlands that his soul underwent something akin to a second conversion, or what might be better termed a rising to a "higher Christian life." He went through deep waters of mental anguish before he obtained peace, but from that time his feet were firmly planted on the Rock of Ages, and he could rejoice in the full assurance of faith. Some who did not sympathise with him in the simplicity of his faith, and looked upon themselves as deeper thinkers than he, used to say of him that it was easy for him to believe, for he never had a doubt or a fear; but, as he often remarked, they little knew what he had undergone in the spiritual conflict, though, by the grace of God, he had been enabled to answer every unbelieving suggestion, and triumph where so many fall.

This mental exercise, painful as it was at the time, was of great use to him, giving him a practical insight into the working of a human heart assailed with doubts and filled with anxiety regarding per-

sonal salvation, and so fitting him for dealing gently and sympathisingly with anxious souls—a duty he was very often called upon to perform in his subsequent ministry, and in which the Lord gave him great success. It adds weight also to his consistent testimony to the simple truth as it is in Jesus, that he had thus looked at and studied all sides of the question.

So joyful had been to him the result of that conflict, that he looked back to the days spent in that Highland manse as some of the happiest days of his life, and he regarded with affection not only the dwellers under the roof, but the very room he occupied had an interest for him because of the near and precious views he had there had of Jesus as his *own* Saviour.

Years before this time, and whilst yet a youth, he had begun the more active labours of the Christian life as a Sabbath school teacher, along with his friend, John Steel, Esq. They worked together with great success in the formation of a Sabbath school, digging out their pupils from some of the lowest parts of Glasgow by house to house visitation. Then, and throughout all his ministry, he had a singular power of arresting the attention of the young, both in preaching and in giving a general lesson in a

Sabbath school. Many can testify how their hearts have been touched in listening to him giving a lesson to the infant division of the Sabbath school at St Luke's,—every eye in the assembly of little ones fixed eagerly on him as he told them of the Good Shepherd's love—his earnestness seeming to impress even their young hearts.

In both the spheres of ministerial labour to which he afterwards was called, he took the deepest interest in Sabbath schools as long as his health admitted of his doing so. His great desire was so to organize the schools that their spiritual tone might be raised; and for this purpose he encouraged the teachers to meet for prayer, and exhorted them to be diligent in visiting their pupils, and above all, to make Christ's glory their aim in the work.

For a time he adopted the plan of lecturing every Wednesday evening on the lesson appointed for the following Sabbath, and found it work well.

II.—ENTERS ON THE MINISTRY.

In 1855 he was licensed by the Presbytery of Islay, and almost immediately afterwards was appointed by the Presbytery of Paisley to the North Church in that town, which had been for some time closed. There was a populous district attached to

it; but the church was, of course, quite empty, and he preached his first sermon to about a dozen people.

He was introduced to his charge by the Rev. Dr Barr, of St Enoch's, Glasgow, who had been his minister for some time previously, and for whom he cherished the highest esteem, ever speaking with gratitude of how much he owed to his teaching, and of the kind interest he took in his welfare. Though Dr Barr undertook to introduce him to his charge, he did not at all approve of his undertaking one so onerous, fresh as he was from the University, and with a frame ill-suited to hard work; but he was eager to enter upon the office for which he had striven so hard to prepare himself, and to undertake which he truly felt himself moved by the Holy Ghost.

At one time he expected to have been sent as a chaplain to the Crimea, but had not finished his college course in time for it. Such an appointment would have suited his tastes, as he had always a sort of romantic interest in soldiers; and when settled in Glasgow, often regretted that the barracks, which closely adjoined, had not been included in his parish.

He used often to describe the deeply solemn feelings of responsibility with which he received ordination from the hands of the Presbytery; and how it

grated on his feelings having to appear at a public dinner that evening and listen to toast-giving and speech-making, instead of spending the time in meditation and prayer, which would have been more consonant with his own feelings, and with the directions of the Church of Scotland.

When first settled in Paisley, kind friends desired to show him hospitality by inviting him to their houses ; but he soon found it impossible to accept their invitations, and gave up all society, devoting himself wholly to his work.

He began by preaching three times every Sunday, and having several meetings during the week, besides devoting a large portion of time to visiting his parishioners. The Lord greatly blessed his efforts, and he soon drew around him an attached and ever-increasing congregation. It is not to be wondered at that all this work and anxiety soon began to tell on his delicate frame.

He writes in his journal, Jan. 28th, 1857:—

“Make me resigned to Thy holy will. Do with me whatsoever is pleasing in Thine eyes. I thank Thee for my sickness ; I thank Thee for my health. Oh! make me more careful of all the opportunities Thou art bestowing on me. On Monday had rather a severe attack of illness. Found, when thinking of

death, I had nothing to look to but the glorious work of Jesus. Felt *then* that the time of health was the season to prepare for death, that it might be pleasant when it came." How he acted upon and realized the truth of this sentiment is best known by those who witnessed his own holy, happy death-bed !

Like all who have become "living epistles of Christ," he had continual longings after closer and closer communion with God. This may be best seen by a few extracts from his journal:—"O blessed Lord, I look to Thee to draw me nearer and still nearer to Thee, in reading, meditation, and prayer. Read a large portion of Bickersteth's life. What a noble act to give up £800 a year for the cross of Christ! Oh, what is my spirit compared to his! But, O Jesus, Thy grace is sufficient. I pray, lead me not into temptation. Draw my thoughts more and more unreservedly to Thyself. Let not the things of time have any influence over me. Ever, O ever, kind Jesus, put Thy Spirit within me, and make me faithful and fruitful.

"Had a little, a very little annoyance to-day, but kept my patience, just because my mind was filled with nobler things before. Amen."

Feb. 1st.—"Holy Father, I thank Thee that Thou has given me the health and the inclination to

preach. Oh, be with me to-day; stand by me. Let my words be uttered with thy assistance. Holy Spirit, come into my heart; strengthen me, and give me souls for my hire."

2d.—"The Lord hath been very good to me this morning. May He do me good from this day forth. Perhaps it may be in pain, sickness, and distress He intends to accomplish my desire. Gracious Jehovah, enable me to bow my head in submission and say, Thy will be done. Fixed on a text for next Sabbath—a double one—Gen. iii. 11—'Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth;' and John xviii. 3—'Then came Jesus forth wearing the crown of thorns.' Holy Father, enable me to meditate, write, and speak as shall be pleasing to Thee. Dr Muir of St James' died last Sabbath—another zealous minister taken to his resting place. Father of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, enable me to labour in Thy vineyard as becomes a minister of Christ Oh! give me souls for my hire—souls for my hire."

5th.—"Rose at twenty minutes past eight; true, I was very tired, but something must be done to save the morning hours; they ought to be sacred to God; that my soul may not continue lean, but that I may increase in grace, in knowledge, love, and zeal, in all of which I am fearfully deficient. I intend to

rest to-day, reading, thinking, and writing. Held two meetings to-night. Lord God Almighty, thanks to Thee for the knowledge of Jesus, my Saviour."

6th.—"Went to Levern, and spoke at the *soirée* this evening; but in spite of myself was very jocular, yet perhaps something I have said may have done good. O Holy, glorious, and Blessed Jehovah! lead me in the path of righteousness. Grant that the conversation I had with the sceptic on the road may be blessed to the saving of his soul."

12th.—"To-night I have to record the graciousness of my God. Spoke freely at the prayer-meeting. Let the sceptic be enlightened. Enable me to do what is right with regard to the girl now in the jail."

13th.—Weak in body to-day. Visited the jail. A mother and daughter in for stealing; sad sight. Oh Lord, my God, Thou who hast preserved me by Thy grace, thanks for my spiritual blessings. Aid me in my meditations."

22d.—"Oh my soul, how cold and languid thou art this morning; how careless, how listless, how little fitted for the glorious work of the ministry. Come, Holy Jesus, into my heart, and warm it with love to Thee and Thy work, that I may be enabled to direct souls into the paths of righteousness.

"I have now to record the mercy of my Heavenly Father. I rose this morning with a cold, languid heart; but graciously did He warm me whilst engaged in His work. May I ever walk in the paths of righteousness, and pursue—though now and then I may be faint—the great aim of my work, the salvation of souls. Preached from first Psalm, and Judges viii. 4—'Faint, yet pursuing.'"

25th.—"Rose much refreshed. The Lord is merciful and gracious to me. I am worthy of nothing—worthy of nothing. Again, at night, I can only write of myself—worthy of nothing. Free grace, free grace is all my hope. Jesus' work is perfect."

28th.—"Still the cold heart remains cold. Oh for a more prayerful spirit, a more devoted heart, a more complete giving up of myself to the Lord—doing everything from one motive—love, strong love to Christ."

March 1.—"Rose at half-past 6. Very anxious about my lecture during the night. Got on well to-day in lecture, sermon, and evening lecture. Thanks, Glorious Father, for what Thou hast done for me this day."

2d.—"Visited a good deal to-day. Had a splendid Bible class; very tired now."

8th.—"Thought over the whole of my sermon

before getting out of bed. A communion Sabbath. Oh that I may have the spirit. I will ask for it. In prayer and sermon much assisted. But the coming in of — put me about a little, when I knew that I had to hurry on his account, and also, that I had him beside me. Forgive me, Father, my sinful emotions. Preached from Isaiah liii. 3—‘The Man of sorrows.’ Mr — preached in the evening. Thanks, praise, blessing, Holy Father, for thy mercy.”

9th.—“Visited many families; a goodly number speaking already of coming to the Sacrament in May. Had a full Bible class. Intend lecturing on ‘The Song of Solomon.’ My text for next Sabbath afternoon, Ezek. xlv. 9—‘Worshippers going through the Temple, not turning.’ The heads of sermon are—order, reverence, progression.”

19th.—“Lay longer than I intended; not pleased with myself. Studied a little in the afternoon; then to Crossflat House to dinner; then visited nineteen families. Enjoyed prayer-meeting; must visit more.”

20th.—“Studied in the morning; visited from 11 till 4. Visited —; was delighted. Holy Father, thanks; may he become Thy child; bless him and his family. May my people be blessed to me, and me to them.”

27th.—“Feel more than ever anxious to win souls

to Christ ; and feel more than ever my own unworthiness, and my inability to labour in my Lord's vineyard. O God, take me away, if it be for the prosperity of Thy glorious cause ; but if it be Thy will to spare me, enable me to be more thoroughly in earnest ; give me more life, more light, more love. Awaken, O Lord, the dead bones in the family, in the congregation, and in the town."

28th, Saturday, 4 P.M.—"In a feverish state, near the end of the sermon. Oh, how I pant for a nearer communion with my God, and for the salvation of my people. Oh, give me the spirit of prayer and supplication for them. Give me some of their souls to-morrow ; oh, give me many of their souls to-morrow. God has heard my prayer. Let me pray more earnestly."

27th, Sabbath.—"Thanks, Father, for the blessing of this day. Hear the prayer offered. Grant that my people may be benefited. Lead them to the Rock that is higher than man."

Thursday, 2d April.—"Felt very tired this morning. A chapel minister's life is a hard one when he does not keep close to his Lord. A good deal of walking to-day ; not a moment to myself. Prayer-meeting very good to-night. To bed tired and worn out."

10th May.—“ A communion Sabbath. How sweet the word to the believer in Jesus! It tells of peace, perfect peace; a peace the world can no more disturb than the wind the ocean. The surface may be ruffled and tossed, but there are fathoms upon fathoms that are still amid all the roaring winds. Come now, oh my soul, cling to the great Master of the Feast: bring the bitter herbs of true sorrow for sin, and unfeigned repentance, and the paschal Lamb will be the sweeter to thy taste. Holy Jehovah, for the sake of Thy dearly beloved Son, give me the aid of Thy Holy Spirit: without Him I am but as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal. Bless, bless and prepare my people for a feast.”

May 11th.—“ Holy Father, Thy mercies have abounded towards me. May I be more grateful. Thou hast heard and hast answered my prayer for peace.”

August 6th.—“ Last Sabbath—my communion Sabbath—much assisted. Yesterday was my birthday. Man’s mind likes to look forward; I look back and mourn, forward and tremble, but would repose on the Lord’s merits. Blessed Jesus, keep me near Thee. My fervent prayer is more faith, more grace, more devotedness to the work of Jesus.”

Sabbath, 11th October.—“ Preached in the Middle

and North churches, and in the jail. Listened to attentively. Feel tired. Holy Father, fit me for the mansions of glory."

14th.—"Called for Mr Wilson, Mr Kirk, and Dr Lockhart. Prepared lecture for Wednesday evening class on 'The Reformers before Luther.' Keep me, Holy Father, near Thee; elevate my thoughts to Thyself."

15th.—"O draw me nearer to Thee. I want a closer, holier walk with Thee, the Pure, the Perfect One. Oh, let me rest this day on Jesus. Spoke earnestly at the prayer-meeting. May it be blessed. Monday morning—much refreshed; ready for another week's work. Lord enable me to prize the privilege of being permitted to work in Thy vineyard."

Nov. 26.—"Longing to be perfect, yet all my actions are puerile; longing to be holy, yet my thoughts are not hallowed. Old Principal M'Farlan died yesterday morning. When the heads of the church are thus falling, oh that I could be wise to keep my lamp burning, and that brightly. . . ."

These breathings of his soul show the bent of his mind, delighting in communion with his Master, and desiring His glory above all things. It has often been remarked of him, the striking resemblance he

bore in life and character to M'Cheyne and Hewitson. "As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." In all three, there was the same delight in communion with Jesus. In his copy of the "Memoir of Hewitson," we find such passages as the following marked in pencil by Mr Aitken:—"What soul-satisfaction when we are breathing the spirit and walking in the light, and enjoying the communion of the Father, and of His Son Jesus Christ. Truly, then our joy is full."—"He refreshes and gladdens us with the flowers and spices of Divine consolation; not that we may look away from Himself to them, but that enjoying the sweet fragrance of His comforting love, we may render it back to Him in the breathings of joy, love, and thankfulness."—"Blessed are they that wait for Him—their expectation shall not perish. It is well to be keeping our garments and watching—well to be daily washing and making our robes white in the blood of the Lamb."—"In the clear light of God's grace and truth alone does the soul mount up with wings like an eagle. To be ever in such a light while waiting for the coming of my Lord be my portion."

In the margin, Mr Aitken writes:—"It is the fallen flesh that interferes with this." He has also marked a great many passages in which Mr Hewitson speaks

of the second coming of Christ, his views on this subject being the same. He shared that holy man's joy in the hope of Christ's speedy coming. To a friend, he writes—"Saturday again; oh! how rapid is the flight of time; but not a bit too rapid, for thus all the sooner shall Christ come in the brightness of His Father's glory, and we shall be with Him. Speed on then, oh, ye moments, speed on with lightning speed, when the archangel's trump shall echo through the vault of heaven, and the dead in Christ shall rise to reign, then the holy time for earth. When my body is weary, and my soul vexed, this gives me joy. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. What a morning that will be when Christ comes, comes with His glory manifested to this world—the glory of manifested Deity. Pure, holy, bright shall that light be. The noon-day splendour will be but darkness to the glory of that light. What a terrific thing for the children of darkness to be exposed to the light of that holy purity of the Deity. What an alternative. The consuming brightness of Jehovah above them, and only the fires of hell beneath them. It will be an *awful reality* that cry to the rocks and to the mountains."

At the date of the last entry quoted from the

journal, there lay in the Paisley prison a wretched man under sentence of death, for the murder of a young girl, by giving her prussic acid. A little child had seen the deed, and was the means of fastening the guilt upon him. He had been a ticket-of-leave man; and the supposed motive for the crime was to conceal the fact that he had stolen money from the girl. After the awful sentence had been passed upon him, he was asked by the authorities if there was any one he should particularly like to direct and assist him in preparing for death. He said there was, but he did not know his name, telling them, however, when he had heard him preach in the prison, and describing to them his tall, slight figure, and pale thin face. They had no difficulty in discovering that it was Mr Aitken of the North Church he wished to have beside him in his awful position. In his journal, Mr Aitken writes as follows:—

Saturday, 26th Dec., 1857.—“Last night, thinking much about the poor fellow condemned to die. To-day, was hardly surprised when the governor of the jail came and told me that he wished to see me. He said that the condemned one had heard me preach, and wished me to converse with him. With much trembling I went to the prison. The chaplain was in the cell. I did not go in until I had learned

as much as I could of his state of mind. I then went to his cell. It has the appearance of an arched room, divided by an iron grating which reaches the ceiling. Behind this the prisoner was seated tailor-wise—he is a tailor—on his bed, which is like a low counter, the bed-clothes being rolled up and laid aside. The prisoner is a little man, with large beard, brow prominent, face round and pale; was what we call *raised* when I went to him. Did not read to him. Spoke of men's guilt and our Saviour. Did not allude to his crime or his position, except once; I spoke of the solemn thought of dying, and that all men were dying. I asked him what I should pray for; he said, mercy. I knelt down and prayed. He remained a second or two kneeling after prayer. I shook hands with him, saying fervently, 'The Lord have mercy on your soul in life, in death, and in eternity.' He wept and grasped my hand nervously. There is something in taking the hand of a murderer into yours; but it evidently melted the heart of the poor wretch. My Master touched a leper and he became clean. Oh, may my Master touch him and me that we may be made clean and fit for heaven. Help me, oh gracious Jehovah, for Christ's sake, in my work as a minister, for I am weak."

Sabbath, 27th.—"Lift on me the light of Thy

countenance ; this day, let my heart be kept very close with Thee. Oh give, give for Jesus' sake, Thy Spirit. Let His influence be on me and on those who hear ; confirm the feeble ; alarm the secure ; convert the impenitent, and let many be this day added to the Church."

Wednesday, 30th.—"Did not see P. W. (the convict) on Sabbath. Preached three times. Saw him on Monday ; spoke of the Saviour ; yesterday, of sin ; gave him the 51st Psalm to read over ; to-day, read the psalm with him, and spoke on the different verses, showing chiefly how David confessed sin and acknowledged the justice of God. P. W. does not as yet (so far as I may judge) see the value of prayer ; tried to make it plain to him. I see in him anxiety to do what will best fit him for death ; but I think he evidently does not know the meaning of opening his heart to God. His cry is only as yet, 'Have mercy upon me.' Does not yet know that he needs to be washed. The publican's prayer, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner,' he knows in part. I do not think that as yet he knows the last part of it. He showed me a most beautiful letter which he had received from the Advocate-Depute Fredk. Maitland Heriot, Esq., who conducted the case for the crown. The letter was full of gospel truth—Christ, the sin-

ner's friend. To-night, I wrote to the chaplain of Wakefield prison, Mr Reynolds, asking him to write to P. W., as he oft speaks of him."

31st Dec.—"O, Father, for Jesus' sake, bless the year that is going—the year that is coming. Whom have I, O Lord, to look to but Thee. O Father, let the new year be a year of constant triumph over sin and Satan. May I be the humble instrument this year of turning many to righteousness. Make me an earnest, faithful, successful minister of Christ. To-day, I went to the prison with Mr Wilson to see P. W. We called on Mr S—— before we went in, and were surprised to hear of his confession of another murder. He intended to have told me of it the day before. When a boy at school (he thinks about 9 years old), a little boy going past, he pushed him into a pond, and the little fellow was drowned. After he had pushed him in, he said he was afraid to cry out; yet he confesses that he *thought* of drowning him. Messrs S——, W——, and I then went to the cell and spoke to him. I prayed; then Mr W. spoke and prayed; after which I remained, taking up the conversation. We spoke of the danger of false hopes. When left alone with him he said he felt as if he were too great a sinner to be pardoned. He feels a burning, heavy lump in his breast; he is

afraid there is no hope—no hope for him. Spoke to him as having made shipwreck of everything—his life, his liberty, his good name—but entreated him to look to Jesus, that He might save his soul from shipwreck. He again expressed his desire that I should come to see him as often as possible. O Lord, guide me and open my lips that I may speak to him aright.”

1st Jan.—“Visited P. W. Restless looking, and beginning to look wistfully before him.”

Probably it was on this occasion that they had a conversation which Mr Aitken has not recorded in his journal, but which he often spoke of as an illustration of how people shrunk even from the presence of a fellow-creature whom they had wronged. On entering the cell, he found the convict restless and abstracted, with evidently some burden weighing on his mind. He would not enter into conversation on any subject. At last, turning suddenly round, he said—“Mr Aitken, do you think I shall see HER?” alluding to his victim. His answer to this striking question was, that while he could not tell him for certain whether he should see her or not, he could tell him that he should certainly see Jesus, either as his advocate before the throne, or as his offended judge.

Mr Aitken goes on to say:—"Thinks, though God has not said so, that he is too great a sinner to escape, yet now and then feels as if he would like to rest on Jesus." "Visited him on Saturday night and Sabbath morning. Gospel all our conversation. On Sabbath, he heard me preach in jail. On Monday, had a long conversation on various topics—spoke of his conversation with Mr Reynolds—his prison experience in Glasgow and here. We talked of the Bible. He remarked how often it was abused, the book destroyed, leaves torn out, scribbled over with names, etc.; and then, (as if forgetting his own wickedness,) he said, 'Is it not strange how wicked the heart of man is?' Spoke a little of his execution. Wishes me to be with him to the last. Asked what dress he should have on! Tuesday—went up to him with two verses from 1 Peter 5—'Humble yourself,' etc. He thought them beautiful. Prayed with him. To-day, he showed me a tract he had received through the Post-office—the account of a man who had been converted when under sentence of death. From a passage I had read in it we spoke, Mr — present, (which, I think, he felt.) Spoke of the finished nature of the Saviour's sufferings and work: nothing left for man to atone. He said that when the thought of the Saviour's kingdom came

into his mind his heart glowed with joy. From former conversations, I understood him to mean that Christ's people were safe, however great their sins, and the greater their sins had been the greater Christ's glory. I felt that there was truth in this doctrine, yet one that man could easily wrest to his own destruction; but a blessed doctrine to the heavily-laden and labouring. — came in and spoke of the need of sanctification and faith. He listened, but spoke little. I, in a few words, spoke of the almightiness of Christ to atone, and of the Spirit to sanctify. He said, 'Oh, Mr Aitken, if any poor sinner sends for you, as I have done, and you speak the same words, surely they will be blessed.' Yet, in his case, he appears to think they may fail. I try to read the heart more by putting *what* he has said, and *how* he has expressed himself on former occasions, together, with what he has said at the moment, than by the mere words themselves. — asked him some questions; but he did not understand them. Thursday—to-night he was very calm. Yesterday, got an excellent letter from his old chaplain in Wakefield. He was evidently greatly pleased with it. Read to-night the wonderful verses in Isaiah xliii. Less in earnest about religion to-night, and too willing to lead the conversation to other

things. He had not the *liveliness* that I expected. Asked if his blood would be on any one. I said, on himself,—‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ He turned to the passage and read it. We spoke of the passage in Ezekiel—‘I will sprinkle clean water,’ etc. Left when his supper was brought in. Not satisfied with this visit. Pardon me, O great Jehovah, and enable me to pray more fervently, faithfully, and frequently for the Spirit. Friday, we spoke to-day of Mr Reynolds: I have received a letter from him. — came in shortly after I had commenced to speak. Saturday, —, present when I entered; they had been speaking of the full assurance of faith. Some one having put the question directly to him—‘Do you see Christ?’ and because he could only *hope*, he was afraid. I was asked earnestly my opinion, and gave it plainly. I was asked it in the following words:—Does every one before going to heaven know perfectly they are going there? *Can* they be sure, or *must* they be sure? I believe that *some* before death, ere they leave this world, have perfect faith on Jesus as their Saviour, and deep down in their hearts they are convinced that Jesus will take them to glory; others, their faith not being so strong, can only hope. Yet hoping in Jesus only, and trembl-

ing for their sinfulness, they pass through clouds to glory. He appeared grateful, and said, with far more earnestness than I have yet witnessed—‘I can only hope; but I hope in Him who created me, who died on the cross and shed his blood for me; I rest only in Jesus, I hope in no other.’ I then spoke of the wisdom of watching our own hearts. It was our duty to pass from hoping to certainty; we should never rest in a mere hope, but ever wait patiently on the Lord, etc. At length we should have the witness of the Spirit within us that we were children of God. Read verse about with him of John xiv., he reading all the concluding verses himself. Spoke briefly on some of the verses and prayed. Promised to see him on Sabbath evening. Bless, Lord, for Jesus’ sake, my short conversation with him. Sabbath evening, spoke of Mr W.’s text—‘How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation;’ then of the love which Jesus asks from us. Matters little what we are, or what we do, if our hearts are not the Lord’s. Spoke of some death-beds. I have been condemned, he said, but what a glorious thing it will be to have Jesus my Advocate in heaven. He will get me off. He pictured the scene. How we should thank God for having been condemned on earth if fit for heaven. Christ, if we give Him our

case, is able to save. This idea we spoke on, alluding to some of the gospel mysteries. I gave him Rom. xi. 33, to the end, to think of. He read, and was seemingly pleased. Read afterwards the first half of Rev. xxi. and prayed, using chiefly the thought of Christ our Advocate; then of how short our half-hour appeared. Spoke of this being his last Sabbath, and of the Sabbath that never ends." Monday afternoon—"After a desultory conversation, chiefly on his prison life, I at last managed to get a serious conversation. He was very solemn. The striking of 5 o'clock led us to speak of the shortness of time. He felt, he said, as if every hour were striking his heart; as he said this, he struck his breast with his hands, as he frequently did. I then solemnly prayed for him by name." Tuesday—"Saw him twice, in the morning and at night. Spoke of the riches of God's goodness. Spoke of his trial, witnesses, etc., and of the source from whence we get the Spirit. The Bible alone, he said, kept him from being insane. Thinks but little of death. Thanked me warmly for my attendance. Spoke of newspapers. Wished nothing said about himself but that he died *confessing* and hoping for mercy through Jesus." Wednesday—"Affected when I entered this morning. Read

about the thief on the cross. Not very well myself; promised to return soon. Saw him from 4 till 6; much calmer. Spoke of various things—hope in Jesus—the greatness of Christ's sufferings. Was with him from half-past 8 till half-past 10. Solemnly we spoke and prayed. Delighted with the hymn, 'One is kind above all others.' This morning spoke with him from the time he was dressed till 5 o'clock; then went to Mr W.'s and back again. He was crushed under a sense of his awful position; but put his trust in Jesus. Wept a little. Spoke to ministers, governor, and officers.

"I am much affected now. Lord Almighty, bless this sad experience for the good of my own soul and others."

It was quite a feature of Mr Aitken's character to enter heart and soul into every case of suffering he was called upon to minister to; and the wretched convict was no exception. After supporting him in his last sad walk, he had to hurry back to the prison, and shutting himself into one of the cells, gave vent to his feelings. It was doubtless this Christ-like feature in his character that caused him to be so very often sent for to minister at the bedsides of the dying, without reference to their belonging to his own flock or even denomination. Such calls he

always looked upon as imperative, and would allow no consideration of personal inconvenience or fatigue to interfere with his answering to them. One Sabbath evening, during the latter years of his ministry, after preaching twice in his own church, and a charity sermon for a neighbouring minister, he was returning home very weary, and expressing a hope that no one would come near him any more that night. But scarcely had he seated himself at his own fireside, when two men came asking him to go and see a dying woman at some considerable distance from his home, her own minister being unable to go to her. She had given birth to her sixth child, and now lay a-dying. This was enough; his own fatigue was all forgotten, and with a cheerful, unruffled spirit, he set out to minister words of comfort to the dying. Deeply did he sympathise with this dying mother, whose chief anxiety was for an idiot daughter, fearing that none but a mother could have patience to attend to her. The Lord enabled him greatly to comfort her, and next day, when he heard that her spirit had taken flight shortly after he parted with her, he thanked God for what he had been enabled to do for her. It was ever to him a cause of deep thankfulness being permitted to gladden the chamber

of death with the tidings of salvation, and like most ministers who truly watch for souls, he could record instances in which the Lord seemed to open the way almost miraculously for him to do so. On one occasion he was sent for, long after midnight, to see a man supposed to be in mortal agony. When he reached his house, about three o'clock in the morning, he found he had cut his throat in a paroxysm of excessive pain from internal inflammation. He had not, however, touched any vital part, and the effect of the bleeding was to reduce the inflammation, and, though he afterwards sank and died, his life was prolonged for some days, till he had time to hear and receive the gospel from the lips of God's servant.

He used to tell of another instance when he was led, as it were, directly by the hand of God to tell of Jesus to one on the brink of the grave, though whether or not his message was accepted he never knew; but may we not hope that He who guided His servant to the spot had a purpose of mercy to the soul, so shortly to be summoned into His presence. In the course of his visitations he went into the house of an old couple who lived close to his church, but they knew nothing about him or his church, and never entered any place of worship.

He then invited them to his church, told them how near it was to them, and told them of his prayer meetings. But somehow he was not satisfied to let them wait till they went to the church to learn the way of salvation, and sitting down beside them, he preached the gospel to them. Not many hours after he left them one of them was called into eternity, having fallen down dead without any warning of what was approaching.

It was not always, however, that the Master gave him the soul-satisfaction of being in time to point the dying sinner to a living Saviour. Sometimes Mr Aitken illustrated the danger of resisting God's warnings by telling of a sceptic he had once tried to convince of his error. It was all in vain; he never would listen to the minister, nor to the words of a praying sister, a member of Mr Aitken's congregation, who sought to win him to Christ, and she was the more anxious as the man was evidently in a decline. One day Mr Aitken was greatly surprised at receiving a message from the dying sceptic to come to him immediately; he had become suddenly very ill. No time was lost in hurrying off, but before he reached his home he met another and another messenger to tell him to hasten to the dying man, so eager was he now to hear the message he had

once despised; but before he had time to hear a word of the precious truth, and just as God's servant opened the door and stood on the threshold, a blood-vessel burst and the man expired.

There was, perhaps, no scene in which Mr Aitken's characteristics of firmness and gentleness were more manifested than at the bedside of the dying. Both these qualities were admirably blended in his character. With all the gentleness of his amiable disposition, he was firm almost to stubbornness in following what he considered the path of duty and principle. He never yielded to the temptation to whisper smooth things into the ear of the dying but, driving them from every refuge of lies, he would point them for safety to the shadow of the Cross—not suffering them to rest in anything short of that only safe refuge. It was truly soul-elevating on such occasions to listen to his words. He would talk to them of what he called “the Glory Home” with familiarity, as though he were already himself tasting of its joys; and so, too, when he touched upon the same subject in the pulpit, his eyes would glisten, and the whole expression of his face would betoken the holy joy and delight with which he dwelt upon the happiness of heaven, till the conviction that one so ripe for glory could not long be

spared to the Church below would force itself on the minds of those who were tremblingly watching his increasing debility towards the close of his ministry. To dying believers he delighted to talk of their union to Christ, the living Head; very often repeating to them that hymn beginning, "A mind at perfect peace with God,"—which was a particular favourite of his — putting increased emphasis on the third verse—

"So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For, in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He."

To one dying believer this hymn was so precious, that when she felt her end drawing near, she told her daughter that if she was not able to speak when the minister came again, she was to ask him to repeat the favourite hymn. Another instance may be related of one in a dying state turning to him for comfort, without the claim at that time of being a member of his flock. A young girl who, years before, had been a member of his Bible class, and now lying on her death-bed, remembering his affectionate, earnest manner of teaching, with tears besought the relative she was staying with to send for him. When he went to her home, he found by

her bedside a minister of another denomination, whose views on the vital doctrines of the Bible were directly opposed to his own. Treating him with all courtesy, he did not allow his presence for a moment to hinder him from speaking to her of salvation through the blood of Christ alone. He gave her the precious truths of the Word with as much freedom as though no one but himself had been present. Those experienced in visiting the sick will be best able to appreciate the difficulty of speaking under such circumstances. They know that unless the heart is elevated by near and constant communion with the Master, how easily they are hindered by the presence of another from speaking on high and holy subjects—at least in the earnest way in which Mr Aitken was wont to speak. He used frequently to express his horror of visiting, for the purpose of saying a few stale words on holy subjects, without any earnestness in the heart.

There are some who like to speak of Protestant ministers as less self-denying than Romanists in exposing themselves to the risk of infection. But Mr Aitken was one of those whose practice was a life-long refutation of the charge. Never did he refuse to visit the most virulent case of fever, even when his impaired health would have seemed a just

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excuse, nor would he listen to the remonstrance of those who would fain have deterred him from so dangerous a duty. "You would not surely have a soldier turn his back on the field of battle," was his reply to such remonstrance on one occasion when sent for to see a wretched woman, dying of fever, who lived in the district, though not connected with the congregation.

He used to tell of more than one instance, when the sound of his voice at the bedside of the fever-stricken seemed to bring them back to reason, stopping their raving while he remained beside them speaking words of consolation, and praying.

In January, 1858, he paid a visit to his native place, Whithorn, and preached there. In his diary there are some characteristic entries regarding it.

23d Jan., Saturday evening.—"O, Jehovah, thanks for this visit to my native place; may it be productive of good. Bless those who hear, and him that speaks. Strange are the feelings I have in this my native place. I do hope that it may be for good I have been brought here, and that when I return, it may be more perseveringly and unweariedly to labour in my present sphere, and there thirst and pant for the salvation of souls, but at the same time not forget that the salvation of my own soul is a

personal and all-important matter to me. Oh that I could be more and more a living witness for the truth of the gospel."

24th.—"Preached to-day in Whithorn; feel benefited by my visit so far. Had some new thoughts on patriotism, etc. Must think of some new subjects for my own flock next Sabbath. Spiritual life less just now; however, will not depend on feelings so much—nay, I will not depend on feelings at all, but on the work of the Lord."

26th.—"To-day left Respen; walked through the Enoch, where father, grandfather, and great-grandfather wrought, and along the road where my mother had skipped when a child. Feelings, strange and mysterious, filled my heart, till my eyes swam tears."

His diary is mostly filled with the holy aspirations of his soul after closer communion with Christ and greater devotedness to His service, but there are occasional notices in it which give a slight idea of the abundance and variety of his labours at this time.

Thursday, 28th March.—"Last night a note from one of my young folk, saying that she wished to see me. Received it after the Wednesday evening class. At the class that night I spoke about inter-

course with ministers, that fully and freely they should speak of the state of their souls; gave illustrations from Zwingli's life. To-night A—— D—— came at the time appointed. She had had serious impressions now and then; a paraphrase on death, read by her brother last Sunday, made her think more seriously. Spoke of her state as important; warned her against falling away; spoke of some who had fallen. She had thought of it, and was afraid; she wept a good deal. Pointed out the 1st and 53d chapters of Isaiah for her to read. She spoke of a companion who was not baptized, and was anxious to see me. Met her after the prayer-meeting. More reserved in her manner than A—— D——; spoke little, but shed tears. Prayed with each of them ere they left. Both are to come to the communicants' meeting to-morrow evening. Spoke to-night at the meeting on the witch of Endor. Went afterwards to a house where a little boy had just died. Spoke to those present earnestly; they appeared unmoved, and unconscious of the need of a Saviour. Jehovah bless, bless abundantly, the means of grace, and answer all prayer for the success of Christ's kingdom. Oh, do open the windows of heaven, and shower down in the greatest abundance, the gifts of Thy Spirit on pastors and people in this place."

Monday 22d.—“Visited to-night by two inquirers, B—— and M——. B—— spake most; liked the other much. Not at all affected apparently in conversation, but very much so in prayer, when the real state shewed itself. It was near the communion; they said they had examined their hearts, and found them desperately wicked. I spoke of the heart as having the seeds of all sin in it. Spoke of the Saviour and of the Spirit. Told them to read John iii. 4, and Ephesians vi. Grant, holy Father, light to guide me in my work, it is noble and blessed; but I am weak, sickly, and feeble in spirit. O my God, I give my heart to thee this night with all its evil propensities, with all its hideousness and vileness. O God, do with me and it what thou pleasest.”

Tuesday 23d.—“A—— came to me again to-night. Do not know what to think; shows good symptoms. My cold heart got warmed in prayer. Must guard myself and others from dwelling too much on self, but more, far more, on Jesus.”

Wednesday 24th.—“After Bible-class and communicants’ meeting, was taken to see a young woman affected in her mind, said to be on religion. It was a sad scene; she was a bonnie, young creature, with a husband and children. The house

was full of strangers, the neighbours coming and going. After being in some time, as she was constantly speaking on religious subjects, I got her mind to think of Jesus, and then prayed. Her husband and I then got her to the sofa. She lay down. I spoke much to keep her from speaking, and at last she listened. I spoke lower and lower, often bringing in the words calmness and peace. Gradually she closed her eyes, spoke, made a pause, longer and longer between each word, till she fell asleep; then I left."

On May 24th he pours out his heart in thankfulness for all that God was then doing for him, and speaks with wondrous affection of his mother, though so long gone from him. He writes, "How delightful to kneel with her in the mansions of holiness, before my Lord and Saviour, and to say amen to her song of praise."

25th.—"He writes about one who, having once been a member of his flock, was now living in Glasgow, and had come to consult him in some difficulty; she spoke of the benefit 'she had received from the prayer-meetings, and from having become a church member.'"

It was Mr Aitken's usual custom to have not only a communicants' class, as most ministers have for

some time before the communion, but he dealt separately and pointedly with each intending communicant, involving an amount of speaking that often completely exhausted him. Probably the woman above alluded to had felt the benefit of this practice. In the same way he was accustomed to deal with fathers applying to him for baptism for their infants, pressing home upon them the all-important question, "Are you not only a member of the visible but the invisible church of Christ?" He would make them come back to him again and again, if not satisfied. Perhaps his very decided opinions in favour of infant baptism, as practised in the Church of Scotland, made him more particularly earnest on such occasions, that the ordinance might not be abused. Often has his soul rejoiced over apparently deep impressions made by these conversations. Among the last times he was able to perform this duty himself, a young man was brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and blessed God that he had been led to apply to Mr Aitken for his little one. It was a great pain to him, in the latter months of his ministry, having to relax in this duty, and even to delegate it to others, so that he had no personal knowledge of the state of mind in which each one brought his child to the

baptismal font (professedly) to present them to Christ.

The next entry in his journal is June 6th.—“Yesterday visited T—— R——, dying of consumption—a man in the prime of life. Was a soldier in the Crimea. I think drink has had something, if not a great deal, to do with his illness. Appears afraid of death; wept when I spoke to him. Sounded his lungs, and found the right one very much affected.

Mr Aitken's lot, both as a Sabbath school teacher in Glasgow, and as a minister in Paisley, was cast where he saw much of the evils of drunkenness. This led him to join the ranks of the teetotalers both for example's sake and to add to the weight of his arguments against it. It was a subject he used to dwell upon occasionally in the pulpit with all the energy of his earnest nature, and would send a thrill through his audience as he described to them scenes of misery which he had witnessed, the consequence of drinking. There was one he used to describe most graphically, and though the incidents are too common, yet when related by him were most impressive. He was attending the death-bed of a poor woman who lay dying in a wretched garret. She had a husband and children, and had once been in

comfortable circumstances, but the husband's intemperate habits had reduced them to their present miserable condition. One cold day he went to visit her and found her shivering; the scanty covering of bed-clothes was gone. On inquiry he found that the husband had pawned them for drink; he waited for no more, but taking one of the children with him he went off to the pawn shop to get the blankets. With a creeping sensation of horror he stood in the sort of box or stall, in which each customer stands separately for concealment, while transacting his business with the broker. The blankets were soon got and sent back to the poor woman, but she was not long left in the peaceful enjoyment of them; next time he went to see her—the weather still cold, and the melting snow penetrating the insufficient roof of the garret—it was to find her clutching the blankets with her feeble grasp, and the inhuman husband dragging them off her to pawn them again. Surely it was the Lord, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, who sent His servant at this moment to her rescue, and directed other kind friends afterwards to assist him in looking after her. Though Mr Aitken was thus zealous in exposing the evils of intemperance, yet he highly disapproved of the way some have of preaching teetotalism, as if it were to

go before the gospel, and was far more powerful to change men's lives than the gospel. One night at a teetotal meeting, after listening to a most powerful address in which the bias of that error was manifest, he felt so indignant that he got on the platform and asked leave to second some motion, merely that he might have an opportunity of telling how the gospel had made a publican in a certain parish in Ayrshire take down his sign, and after his conversion take to selling milk instead of that which oft proves the ruin of soul and body.

About this time his sister, to whom he was so devotedly attached, and to whom he owed so much in earlier days, fell into bad health. She had married and gone to America, and he looked upon his separation from her as a bitter trial. Her weekly letters to him were one of his sources of greatest earthly comfort. He writes—

7th Dec.—“Thanks, oh gracious Father, for the good news of my sister's recovery. Bless me to-day in my endeavours to fulfil all the duties of my office, especially in the important work of directing souls to Jesus. Thanks, Lord, that some do come inquiring what they shall do to see the King in his beauty. Good Lord, give me a soul-view of Him who is altogether lovely; and that, knowing Him, and having

the blessed knowledge that I know Him, others may be guided aright."

18th.—"Thou knowest the bitter drop in my cup this morning. I bring it to Thee, Holy Father, that the single drop may be diluted by the many sweets of the day, and give me joy instead of pain. Thanks, gracious God, for all Thy bounteous mercies to me. Enable me this day to resist sin. Thanks for a mother's memory."

19th.—"O Lord, I thank Thee that Thou didst remove the pang, that Thou didst dilute the drop. I wish to show my gratitude by a thanks-living unto Thee."

Sabbath, 13th January.—"A little weak; did not like a few streaks of blood that came up after preaching to-day. Spoke on the use and intention of a National Church; felt the importance of the subject. Blessed Jehovah, I am a monument of Thy grace, that Thou art so slow to anger, and merciful. Make me a shepherd worthy of the name. Poor erring wanderers, may they be brought back by me to the flock. My sisters and brothers each, bless them. May we be brothers and sisters in the Lord. Jesus, I am weary, weary; I'll rest in thine arms. I rest with Thee, Holy Jesus."

Sabbath, 27th.—"My soul this morning is very

dull. I know I have the oath of God on my head, but, alas! how little I am affected by it. I should be ever leading my people upwards—alas! how I neglect them. What am I to do to-day? Two glorious subjects; but with a dull heart and languid spirit, what can I do? Oh, my soul, come and seek the Lord in prayer. Cast thyself upon Him; ask Him to help thee in this thine hour of need. Oh, do come and seek Him this Sabbath morning, and plead the merits of His Son; come and pray for the influences of the Spirit; ask to have all thy backslidings healed, thy transgressions blotted out, thine iniquities forgiven. Wrestle in prayer this morning; the greater thy earnestness, the greater thy blessings, the more wilt thou be a blessing to the people.

“Lord, be with me in all I have to do this day. May I learn to obey more and more. May I not only assent to the doctrines, but consent to the duties of the Bible.”

Friday, 4th March.—“J—— M—— acknowledges convictions of sin. Told her of the Holy Spirit’s whisperings to the conscience, and she must listen and obey. Bearing reproach for Christ; shewed how she was honoured in this, and that if Christ were to pluck a thorn from His brow, willingly

should she place it in her bosom. Gave her Psalm fifty-first to read and pray over. Refused to go to the ordination dinner. Must withdraw more from the world, and limit myself to my work, bending to it all the energies of my mind. Oh bless my beloved sister; God, in Thy mercy, spare her, if it be Thy will. What is death to her? great gain. But, Lord, spare her, if it be Thy blessed and holy will. Oh what shall I ask for my sister? Lord in heaven, do with me as Thou wilt, but bless, bless her abundantly. Shall I have hard thoughts of Thee? Eternal Jehovah, come and be with me, for oh Thou lovest the children of men."

III.—VISIT TO AMERICA.

The news of his sister's health became now gloomier and gloomier, till at last he made up his mind to go to see her, and was enabled to make such arrangements that he could stay away for three months. About the middle of April his preparations for the journey were completed, and he writes:—

18th April, 1859.—"Good Lord, help me to do all to Thy glory, and ever remember that Thou art my Lord."

On that same day he embarked, and the following Saturday he writes:—

23d April.—“Have had some long conversations with a few of the passengers. One, a sharp intelligent Canadian, entered into conversation with me about church matters; he appears conscientious; we had a long chat, first about his reasons for leaving the Church of England. He had intended to take orders, but the following circumstances coming to his knowledge he gave up thoughts of it:—An open and avowed infidel getting a government appointment, requiring him to be a member of the Church of England, he went to his parish church and knelt with the other communicants at the altar rails. The clergyman refused to administer the sacrament to him. The infidel then took him to a court of justice and got him fined in heavy penalties. This so shocked my-fellow passenger that he gave up all idea of joining the Church of England. I then tried to introduce the subject of personal religion, but failed. We talked of the Sabbath; he considers a seventh day binding upon the human race, and would have the seventh day kept free from labour by law. The Christian Sabbath, which he prefers calling the Lord’s day, he thinks binding upon Christians, from the account of the keeping of the

Sabbath in the New Testament, and from the unbroken chains of historic evidence. Among the passengers is a London milliner going out to Quebec to commence business there; from her I have learned something of the London dressmaker's life; how shamefully they are made to work during the busy season! hence death makes sad havoc amongst them. There is a couple who sit at the same table with me, in whom I feel much interested: the husband Canadian, the wife German: both are consumptive; I would like to be of use to them. There is also among my fellow-passengers a poor widow returning to Montreal, which she left some time ago with a son who was in delicate health. He died in Ireland, and now she is returning to her other children. She is a Roman Catholic, but has had several conversations with me; she is evidently liberal in her views. I must spend the rest of this day in preparing for to-morrow."

Tuesday morning. — "On Sabbath conducted service, but felt unwell. Sabbath and Monday were squally. This morning, the sea a little calmer."

30th.—"Last night had a meeting in the fore part of the ship with the steerage passengers. Gave away tracts, and spoke to them on the Lord's prayer. A Baptist minister concluded with prayer. Mr ———

and wife continue to interest me much. The wife is very young, she loves her husband; and yet he is one evidently easily led astray. We are now in the Gulf of St Laurence, and soon expect to see land on either side. The wind is becoming a little more favourable."

Sabbath, 1st May.—"Preached in the forenoon in the cabin. Evening in the steerage."

2d.—"Got off with the first train. Saw Quebec from the opposite side."

Montreal, Tuesday, 10th May, 1859.—"Good hast Thou been unto me, Holy Father. In safety Thou hast brought me across the ocean, and permitted me to see my beloved sister, and speak to her the soothing words of inspiration. Jehovah, my soul thanketh and adoreth Thee for Thy loving-kindness to Alexina and John. Praise for the soul-communion we have had. Thanks for the blessing Thou hast given me of sitting at Thy table, and speaking a word in the pulpit."

Again he pours forth his heart in prayer for his beloved sister Alexina, that if it were God's will she might be spared. Long before this her physician had given up all hope of her recovery, and even expressed great wonder that she still lived.

Mr Aitken often spoke of this circumstance as an instance of direct answer to prayer. They had prayed fervently to be permitted to meet, and now for a whole month they had been privileged to enjoy soul-communion with each other, and then the Lord removed this precious sister to the courts above. The pain of this parting he never forgot, and, years afterwards, could not speak of it without tears. Shortly after she had breathed her last, he made a solemn renewal of his dedication to God, not as an entry in his journal, but written on a sheet of paper, as follows:—

Montreal, June 14th, 1859, four o'clock A.M.—
“Alexina left us an hour ago; she passed away quietly like mother. I have hope and joy in her departure. O Eternal Sovereign, grant to me the sanctified blessing with this affliction. From this moment enable me to live unto Thee—unto Thee alone. I would consecrate my life anew entirely unto Thee. O Eternal, enable me to act a Christian brother's part to those left. Lord join us in Jesus, Lord bless us, Lord shine on us with Thy face, make us Thy devoted followers in Christ. Come, Holy Spirit, come and breathe on each of us. Hear, O Eternal, for the Lord Jesus' sake.”

The voyage home seems to have benefited his

health, and he returned to his work with renewed vigour.

IV.—REVIVAL TIMES.

One of his greatest sources of joy and comfort at this time was the Christian fellowship and co-operation of his beloved friend, Robert Kerr, Esq. Before their friendship commenced, he had felt the want of Christian fellowship, and writes:—"I have often felt the want of Christian companionship. Bless, O God, the young man who has spoken to me; bless him to me, and me to him. May we oft meet and influence each other's souls to love and good works. Guide us both in our various spheres. May both so act that Christ shall be honoured, His kingdom hastened, and souls snatched from perdition."

When in America, he heard some incidental mention of the work of revival then going on in various parts of that continent, but did not attach much importance to it, scarcely recognising it as a work of the Spirit. He often (afterwards) described the uncertainty of his mind in regard to it, when he got back to Paisley, where the work in America was the constant topic of conversation.

When the work commenced in Ireland, Mr Kerr

and he resolved to satisfy their doubts by going to see the thing for themselves. They visited Belfast, and several other places, and became entirely convinced that the Lord's Spirit was at work. Though there might be counterfeits, as in the days of the apostles, it was no less a work of the Spirit. At one place where they found two zealous ministers labouring till they were quite worn out, Mr Aitken threw off the incognito in which he had visited them, and offered them his aid in their blessed work. After this, when a similar work of gracious revival began in Paisley, the minister of the North Church became the active and honoured instrument of leading many an anxious soul to Christ. He was often asked to publish a detailed account of cases of awakening and conversion under his ministry, but would never consent to do so, as he considered such publications injurious to the soul-prosperity of the converts.

He paid a second visit to Ireland the following year (1860), and finding many of the converts steadfast in their profession, he became more than ever convinced of the genuineness of the work. In a little note book he has preserved the names of places visited by him, and where a great spiritual work was done; and also the names of individuals with

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whose cases he seems to have been familiar, but of which he gives no details. Writing of one place which he had visited on both occasions, he says regarding it in 1859:—

“There was the great excitement, the opposition, the zeal of the converts, the trances,” etc.

Nov., 1860.—“There is calmness—not coldness. Saw the schools where so many have been taught to read. Fifteen young women who, a year ago, could not read a word, can now read the Bible fluently. Who have been their teachers? Those who had been quickened, etc. They kept up the work during the winter at a place about a mile from the town. Wet or dry, it was all one to them. Heard a man who used to keep a low public-house talking to the fallen, and telling them ‘that not their sins kept them out of heaven, but their unbelief.’ What was he a year ago? Not a bit better than themselves. At that time God had called him. He must have perished eternally, but God had mercy on him. He believed in Jesus. Jesus kept him from falling. Jesus was everything to him.”

“Was much struck at this time with the way in which the personality of the infinite God was held out. ‘The personal living God,’ was an expression I was delighted to hear. Feelings hold a subordinate

place, and I think a truer place than last year. As was to be expected, the ignorant put too much confidence in feeling. Many of the intelligent, on the other hand, decried feeling, no doubt because they saw it was much abused, though I confess I have seen little of this abuse either by one party or the other."

Thursday, 23d August.—"Last Sabbath preached in Inchinnan in the morning; in the afternoon, in the North, on Nicodemus, but bothered with pride. I want to have a single aim—God's glory."

Monday, 6 A.M.—"Started for Mr Dickie's, at Loch-Leven; Mr Steel with me; returned last night. Had a few words with some of my teachers, who are evidently longing for peace."

Monday, 27th.—"I have a desire to walk close with my God; but oh! the weakness of my soul is lamentable. May the Lord draw me and keep me very near himself."

28th.—"Holy God, may this day be so hemmed, that none of it may be allowed to ravel. O, Holy Dove, come to rest upon me, and guide me with Thy influence for the building up and strengthening of immortal souls."

He was so accessible and gentle in his way, that inquirers flocked to him. His house was full of

them from morning till night, so that those around him wondered when he got time to prepare his sermons, for he never allowed his regular pulpit ministrations to suffer from all this extra work.

His labours were not confined to Paisley; he assisted at meetings in many parts of the country, where his name became almost as well known as in Paisley. Speaking on his death-bed of his spiritual state at this time, he said—"My soul^a was very bright then." A few extracts from his diary will testify the truth of this:—

Wednesday, 15th August.—"Yesterday had two very interesting letters, one from a brother minister lamenting the earthward tendencies abounding in his soul; the other from one of my people complaining of the hardness of his heart. A long and pleasant conversation with R—— K——. O Lord, help Thy poor."

1st September, 1860.—"To-day had nine anxious ones. Lord, guide me in dealing with them. May my mind be kept looking to Jesus, and resting on the Lord."

Monday, 22d October.—"Last week was one of wonders; Kilmarnock, Saltcoats, Dunlop, were specially blessed by the Lord. Already are there droppings of the shower on the North. O blessed

Lord, keep me to-day very near Thee. Let me live for Jesus. Gracious Lord, be near, near to me."

Tuesday, 23d.—"Each day Thy Spirit is giving many and rich blessings. Most heartily I thank Thee for the help I had last night. Oh grant that the personal words may be blessed to those addressed. I thank and praise Thee for those who said *Yes*. Lord, keep them as the apple of Thine eye, give them a sweet, hallowed influence from the Holy Ghost. Now, Lord, be with me. I want to meditate this morning on heaven."

Monday, 5th November.—"Only two months, and then another year. How startling the speed of time! My God, I thank Thee for the views Thou hast given me of Jesus as everything."

Thursday, 5th December, 1860.—"Three precious meetings I have enjoyed this week—Dunlop, Abbey Close U.P., and North to-night. O God, bless them very abundantly. I feel as if the Lord were waiting and wearying to bless Paisley very richly with His grace."

Friday, 6th November, 1860.—"Did not rise this morning till ten o'clock, being sick with cold. W—— R—— came in about baptism for his child. Was affected about his soul. Pressed on him to decide for Christ at once. Prayed twice with him.

Visited the C——'s. Had a long chat with the sickly daughter. Found her anxious to rest, and clear as to her need of a Saviour. Eldest daughter anxious, and the sailor son impressed."

1st January, 1861.—"The clock has struck; the old year is dead! Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? Let this be my motto for the new year. Keep me from looking too much to works. Oh, may my soul feast on Jesus. Holy Lamb of God, I love Thee; take me, and do with me what Thou wilt. Holy Spirit, be my Comforter this year. Oh, bless the year to my congregation. Lord, shower down Thy best blessings on them. Lord quicken me. I am Thine, Thine. See my signature,

"JAMES AITKEN."

"O blessed Jesus, is this not to come nearer and nearer to Thee. Let my soul rejoice in communion with Thee, Holy Lamb of God."

2d.—"Visited C——n. Miss A—— very ill. Doctors have no hope of her recovery. Her soul comforted when led up to Jesus. A long, pleasant conversation. Intend seeing her to-day once more. Myself hid, and the Lord magnified. I am to be with sick ones all day. The Lord help me, and give them all the balm of Gilead. Holy Lamb of God, fill my soul, fill my whole

being, let me not lose Thee for one moment all this day."

In the Spring of 1862, Mr Aitken accepted a unanimous call from the congregation of St Luke's, Glasgow, to become their pastor. When the result of this change afterwards proved unfavourable to his health, he always checked the murmurs of his friends by saying, "You don't know how many souls I may have been the means of saving in the Calton." He was thoroughly convinced too that he had taken the step in subservience to God's will.

It was not, however, to be expected that he could say farewell to his attached flock in Paisley without a pang. Many of them looked to him as their spiritual father, and he had been the sole instrument of gathering them together and building them up as a congregation. This faithful servant was, however, resolved that the Master should have all the glory, and sat down to write his farewell address, expressing his determination not to speak of his own work, and to this he adhered. He chose for his text the last words of the apostle Peter to the Church of Christ—"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Urging them forward to higher and higher attainments in the Divine life. He studiously avoided any allusion

that might elicit a manifestation of feeling from the people. With calmness he got through the whole duty, but those who saw him in the vestry afterwards, knew something of what the effort cost him.

V.—MINISTRY IN ST. LUKE'S, AND VISITS TO ROME.

In the autumn of this year, a few days spent in Saltcoats with his beloved brother in the ministry, the Rev. D. E. M'Nab, was greatly blessed to the strengthening of his health; and he entered upon the winter's work with amazing vigour and energy, labouring both among the people and in the study.

At this time he devoted much attention to the study of the Old Testament in the original. Like most who live in the constant realization of their oneness with Christ, he delighted in the Song of Solomon; finding in the loving words of the Church addressed to her Heavenly Bridegroom, the breathings of his own soul. Leviticus, also, was, to his thoughtful and spiritual mind, a rich storehouse of gospel truths, from whence he drew forth much to instruct his people. During the course of the spring, he delivered several lectures on the Five Offerings. So strong a hold did this subject take on his mind, that some time afterwards, when called

upon rather unexpectedly at the Perth Conferences to address a meeting, he took these lectures as the basis of his address; and so deep was the impression made by his earnest words, that many Christians who had not before known him, now held out the right hand of fellowship to him.

One who saw him then for the first time writes of him:—"I can bring back to my mind his bright, happy smile as he spoke of Jesus. The remembrance of him I shall ever feel was one of the bright spots of earth to look back to."

Some of those same friends, observing the weakness of his chest, desired earnestly to obtain for him a change to some more genial clime for the winter; and at their solicitation he was appointed, by the Committee of the General Assembly, to go to Rome, and seek to establish a mission there in connection with the Church of Scotland, for the benefit of members of her communion resident there during the winter.

The fatigue of the journey told unfavourably on his health at first, but after being settled there for some weeks, there was a marked change for the better. Truly the Lord was with him there, and abundantly blessed the words spoken by him. Many dear children of God had their souls refreshed

and quickened both by his preaching and private intercourse with him. One whose Christian friendship and fellowship was very precious to him, says of him, "To me he was the means of imparting much strength. I shall always look back on the time when I heard the precious truth from him as a period of my life in which I can trace some growth in grace, and clearer views of the love of Jesus, and the happiness of endeavouring to live here below only for Him."

Mr Aitkin was too far advanced in the Divine life to be shackled by the spirit of sectarianism, and when it was possible, most willingly did he co-operate with other Christians.

During the time of his first visit to Rome he preached alternately with the representative of the Free Church, then resident there, and reckoned amongst his dearest friends, and those most interested in his ministrations, many members of the Church of England.

On the last Sunday of January he dispensed the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper; and it was ever a subject of rejoicing to him the remembrance of how many different denominations of Christians united with him that day in celebrating a Saviour's dying love. His subject of discourse was the seven

sayings on the cross; and by many it was felt to be a peculiarly solemn time; both as they listened to the earnest words of the minister, and afterwards, when the emblems of redeeming love were put into their hands. Truly the Master was present, fulfilling His promise in that upper room in Rome, to the souls of His own children, more than one of whom have since been called to see the King in His beauty.

Though there was much in Rome to interest him, yet the care of his own flock pressed so heavily on his mind, that he determined to return home early in Spring, and it was with great difficulty that his kind physician, Dr Gayson, and other friends, prevailed upon him to delay his journey till a more suitable season of the year.

On his way home he visited Florence and Leghorn, preaching in both places. It was not his intention to have remained more than two or three days in the former place; but so many begged him to remain over the Sabbath, and preach to them, that, after having all his preparations for departure completed, he acceded to their wishes, and remained, thinking the Lord might have something for him to do there. In the morning he preached for the Rev. Mr M'Dougal of the Free Church, and in the even-

ing addressed a meeting in the house of a dear brother in the Lord, William Crosbie, Esq.

On the 8th of May he appeared once more in his own pulpit, and now commenced his last season of active labour amongst his people, whilst yet he was able to go out and in among them, and minister to all their spiritual wants ; and doubtless this period is impressed on the minds of many of them as a time rich in spiritual privileges, in which the Holy Ghost truly spoke to them by the lips of their now glorified pastor. They can recall the fervour with which he implored the unconverted to flee to Jesus, and close with the offers of salvation before it was too late, and the affectionate earnestness with which he entreated God's own children to walk more closely with Jesus, and live more devotedly to His service, whilst the very expression of his countenance seemed to speak to them of heaven, and of a spirit within which was fast ripening for glory. His prayers, too, were not uttered according to the cold conventional form of "an unwritten liturgy." They were the very breathings of his soul, as the wants of his people came before him, and as the Spirit gave him utterance. Such, indeed, was the character of his prayers during the whole course of his ministry. He tried to use the simplest language, that all might

join. Simplicity of language was his great aim both in prayer and preaching, and he often remarked that it was more difficult to attain that than an apparently more learned style. Was he not in this following Him who was "anointed to preach the gospel to the poor?" It was remarked of him by one who knew him intimately, and who, though not a member of his church, often heard him preach, that, notwithstanding the gentleness of his spirit, never was there a man who more boldly or fearlessly told the truth to his people.

The broad line between Christ's people and the world he dwelt on most faithfully, however offensive to those seeking to serve God and the world. He was wont often to say, You must be sheltered under the blood, *separated* unto Christ, and know Him as your *own*.

On one occasion, when pleading for volunteers to assist him in the Lord's work, he said that he would not for worlds ask any of them to work for Christ, unless they felt that they truly belonged to Him, and at first one only answered the appeal; but after a time one and another came offering to work for Christ, till at last his sitting-room used to be filled every Saturday evening with workers who met there to read and pray with him, and doubtless there are

some of those men who will never forget the privilege then enjoyed of Christian fellowship and communion with their pastor, and who are looking forward with joy to renew their communion with him in the fellowship of the Church above.

The doctrine of election he held strongly and proclaimed unhesitatingly; he always said it was a doctrine for God's children to rejoice in, and that the unconverted had nothing to do with it. He had great facility in composition, otherwise it is probable his delicate frame would not so long have stood the work. It was his custom first to get his mind filled with his subject, then think it out carefully before committing it to paper; after that, once or at the most twice reading over sufficed for committing to memory. He seldom, indeed, never, wrote his sermons out fully; often the most touching parts were unthought of till the moment of utterance. There is an entry in his journal which will illustrate this—"Preached to-day from an old text, but it was almost a new sermon. At the close, my soul burst forth into a kind of rhythmical address, but I forget much of what I said. H—— thought I was quoting Longfellow, at which I was much amused."

His attitudes in preaching were often most impressive; but he was quite unconscious of them, and

could remember nothing about them after coming down from the pulpit, so absorbed was he in the one great desire to impress the truth on the minds of his hearers. This desire was always uppermost in his mind when called upon in any way to address his fellow-creatures.

From his position as a minister in the east end of Glasgow, in the midst of the working classes, the couples who came to him to be married were innumerable—of all denominations, and no denomination. This occasion he was always anxious to improve, by giving them a word of the gospel, particularly if he observed from their beckings and bowings that they were Romanists, remarking afterwards—"I was determined that if they never heard the gospel before, they should hear it to-day." Thus did he seek to preach the Word in season, and out of season.

On the evening of the Lord's-day, when his work was done, and he sat down to meditate on the events of the day, the question used to come from him continually—"I wonder how many, or if any, souls have been blessed by my words to-day?"

He frequently exhorted his people on the subject of joining heartily in the praises of God, and if he observed them flagging in it, he was sure to notice

it, 'telling them how painfully it affected his own mind when there was listlessness in this part of the worship, and how it cheered and gladdened him when all joined with heart and voice to celebrate Jehovah's praise.

Having been so long absent during the winter and spring from his flock, he resolved to spend the summer in Glasgow, and go to the Bridge of Allan when the severe weather came on in the winter. But long before then, while it was yet early in the autumn, it became evident that his health needed a change.

Several circumstances concurred at this time to try him. The death of a friend and brother in the ministry—Rev. Thomas Logan of Haggs—to whom he was much attached, and with whom he had maintained a steady friendship from the time they had entered College together; a hurried journey to London, undertaken in the hope of being in time to soothe the last moments of a dying relative, but only to find that, some hours before his arrival, he had entered the spirit-world: these, and other circumstances, told most injuriously upon his delicate constitution.

The Church again and repeatedly demanded his services in Rome; but again and again he refused,

not wishing to go so far away from his people. Still he felt it a difficult question to decide. Some words written to him about his duty to the Church of Scotland rested on his mind; and should strength be given him to work at all in winter, he felt that he would be glad to devote it to the Roman Mission, and as he must be absent from his people, it could make little difference to them where he was.

After a long and painful mental struggle, he made up his mind to accept the chaplaincy in Rome; and, following an advice which had been often given to him, remain for two years on the continent. At the same time he resolved to resign the pastoral charge of St Luke's. Though no doubt the Church would never demand such a sacrifice from one who had lost his health in the Master's service, still he said that his own conscience demanded it, but that he was far too weak and ill to enter into explanations regarding the matter either to the Presbytery or the people, and would do so by letter if God spared him to reach his destination. So fixed was he in his determination, that he broke up his whole establishment, and sold his furniture, and with a heavy heart turned his back upon what had been to himself and others a blessed, peaceful, happy home, where, by God's grace, he was enabled to put in

practice all that he preached to others, for it was in the domestic circle, more than in his public ministrations, that the heavenly beauties of his character were most seen and felt.

He took the journey to Rome by easy stages, and by the time he had been a few weeks there his health had so improved, that the hope of being able to return to his people began to revive in his bosom, and cheered him unspeakably; so that instead of sending his resignation to the Presbytery, he sought a temporary leave of absence; and at the same time he wrote a letter to his elders and managers offering to resign, but expressing his willingness to return, and his desire to die in harness.

Their answer was in accordance with his wishes. Feeling that a wrong impression of his conduct in going to Rome had been circulated among the people, he requested that the above statement of facts should be given to them from the pulpit. He said he had always intended to have done it himself, had strength been given him to do so.

His ministrations in Rome in the winter of 1864 began by his addressing a congregation of three, but soon and rapidly the numbers increased, and he began to rejoice in the prospect of success in his mission, when God in His mysterious providence

laid His hand upon His servant. He was seized with a violent hemorrhage in the lungs, which prostrated him for days. After a partial recovery he attempted again to preach, but a severe relapse a few days afterwards convinced him that it was not God's will that he should continue the mission in Rome. To him it was a sore trial, being unable to fulfil the mission entrusted to him by the church; but he was soothed by the tender sympathy and kindness of those who had been principally instrumental in sending him.

Confined now to his sick-room, he earnestly • desired to learn all the lessons God intended to teach by this discipline. He often said—"I think God has sent us to Rome, and shut us up in this room, that we might study our Bibles more diligently." And truly he did feed upon the Word. When unable to read himself, he would listen to the reading of it for hours; and it was among the first symptoms of returning health, a daily demand for his Greek Testament.

Towards the end of January his place in the mission was supplied by the Rev. William Gordon of Ruthwell, which was a cause of great joy to him. Besides the enjoyment he had in Mr Gordon's society, his presence seemed to take a load off his

mind, and even to have a beneficial effect on his health. From that time he improved rapidly, but nothing could allay the craving he had to return to his own country; and, in spite of all remonstrances, he returned to Scotland in the beginning of April, still hoping that the Lord would enable him to do a little among the flock. And his desire was gratified, for he was enabled to preach in the afternoon of many, indeed most, Sabbaths during the summer and beginning of autumn; and when not able to preach, he generally went up to the pulpit to read the announcements that he might have an opportunity of saying two or three earnest words, which some of the people have said were more to them than many sermons, indeed, that his very presence in the church warmed their hearts.

Having now to leave in the hands of others much that he was accustomed to look after himself, occasioned him many annoyances, which pressed heavily upon one of his sensitive disposition, and hurried on what was now too evidently approaching. But the Father allowed them, that His precious servant might be the more ripe for glory, while He enabled him still to act with characteristic firmness and gentleness in dealing with all these matters, and

thus to show the power of Divine grace in the heart of the renewed man.

He preached for the last time a fortnight before the Autumn Communion, and, so great was his weakness, that he had to kneel on a chair whilst delivering his discourse. The following Sabbath he paid his last visit to St. Luke's in person; though how often he was with them in spirit is best known to Him who alone sees the heart. Thinking to reserve his strength for the Communion Sabbath, he did not preach on the day of preparation, but came home weary and worn out notwithstanding.

He had intensely desired to dispense the Lord's Supper among his people at this time, but it soon became evident that it was not the Father's will that he should enjoy that privilege. His mind was, however, free from all anxiety as regarded his people on the occasion, as his friend, the Rev. R. H. Muir of Dalmeny, readily consented to take his place on the Communion Sabbath. When that day came round he was confined to bed, but so cheered was he by the presence of the Master in that sick chamber, that when one who had left him to be present at the last table returned home, he said:—"Well, I have been in St. Luke's the greater part of this day, and felt quite happy till I saw your face, and knew by it

that you had been enjoying a glorious privilege, then I felt a pang."

VI.—CLOSING DAYS.

After this a slight improvement enabled him to rise daily from his bed, but soon he felt that the exertion was wearing him out, and he gave it up. The oppression on his breathing now became excessive, coming on in fearful paroxysms, but never provoking a murmur from his lips. Again and again, when a remark was made about how much he was suffering, his reply was, "Oh, the Father is very merciful; He is dealing very tenderly with me."

It was now clear to himself that the earthly house of his tabernacle was about to be dissolved; but so intense was his love to Him into whose presence he *knew* he was going, that there was but one element of pain to him in this thought; and most sincerely could he adopt the words of the hymn:—

"I leave the world without a tear,
Save for the friends I held so dear;
To heal their sorrows, Lord, descend,
And to the friendless prove a friend."

To one he said, "I think this is the last illness;" and probably not thinking the words had been received in so submissive a spirit as became a

Christian, he added, "I am quite willing to remain forty years instead of four with you; but surely you would not wish me to remain a moment longer with you than would be for God's glory."

In Rome, when apparently quite as near the brink of the grave—and the prayer was continually poured forth, at his bed-side, that the healing hand of the Great Physician might be laid upon him—he seemed to join heartily in the prayer; and most marvellously and directly were these prayers answered. But now it was seldom, and only when moved by the grief of others at the prospect of losing him, that he seemed to join in the entreaties that the Lord would spare him a little longer to the church below. Once only, when earnestly requested to do so, did he plead for it with his own voice; and when others prayed for it, adding the words, "If it be Thy will," he used to say, "I like you to say that."

It was impossible, in watching his death-bed, not to be struck with his thankfulness of spirit. He never dwelt on his bodily suffering, or any subject of complaint; he seemed to forget every unkindness that ever had been done to him. He delighted in recounting God's mercies to him, both as regarded temporal and spiritual comforts, often making such

remarks as the following:—"I have everything I could wish for—rest, perfect peace, and ease of mind, the great debt having been paid long ago." "I am able to rest simply and entirely on the finished work of Christ, though I have no ecstasy of mind."

The breathlessness from which he suffered so much prevented his talking or enjoying much communion with the Christian friends who came to inquire after him. Often he was unable even to see them. This, of course, was a privation to one who so delighted in the communion of saints. But he rejoiced in the privilege of being attended by a Christian physician. The unwearied attention, kindness, and Christian fellowship of Dr Alexander Simpson were among the comforts of his latter days. Being visited by him twice every day, many were the precious moments of communion they had together. Being thus unable to talk much, and, from weakness unable to hold a book for any length of time, he delighted in being read to. Of all uninspired writings he seemed to enjoy most the reading of Rutherford's Letters. That holy man's breathings of love to Jesus seemed to strike a responsive chord in the heart of the dying saint, and often would he have on his lips terms of endearment to the Saviour quoted from that writer.

The salvation of those near and dear to him was a subject of continual interest to him. He sought to press home upon them the necessity of deciding for Christ; and, before he was too weak to hold his pen, he wrote to more than one exhorting them to do so. As he neared the shores of Immanuel's land, he seemed more than ever anxious that all he loved should share with him the glories of that country. Rejoicing in the thought of one dear one having lately joined the company of travellers to Zion, he sent her a message, shortly before his departure, saying, "Tell A—— that it is a great joy to my soul that she has laid hold on Christ so quickly."

On Monday, the 11th of December, it became evident that the sands of time were nearly run out. Still God kept his waiting servant in perfect peace, and preserved his intellect unimpaired, and his joy in the Lord undiminished, to the last. As day by day he grew weaker in body, he sought to cheer the mourners at his bedside by pointing to the prospect of the Saviour's speedy coming. This, the great hope of the church, was the joy of his heart. Even a few hours before his death, he spoke of the possibility of Christ's coming before he should be summoned hence; and to one he said, "Would it not be

joyful for us to be caught up hand in hand to meet Him?"

Though this was his desire, yet he shrank not from the cold hand of death. Even on the morning of the 14th December, when he felt its heavy weight laid upon him, he could look up in the confidence of faith in Jesus, and say to a dear friend who had come to see him, in a cheerful voice, "Well, M——, I am going home," while a bright smile lighted up his heavenly countenance. A little later, on that same day, he sent for the friend in concert with whom he had begun his first labours for the good of souls, that he might express to him some of his last wishes, and to him he was able to say that he had neither a cloud nor a doubt.

The oppression on his breathing, which throughout his illness had been so painful, seemed now to pass away, and he fell into the sleep of death, as quietly as into a natural sleep.

His kind doctor was by his side at the moment, though it was not his usual hour for visiting him. No doubt God had sent him to comfort and assist the bereaved. And while he sought, both by the words of Scripture and in prayer, to lead their hearts upwards, where their precious one had gone, even while they were kneeling round the "clay casket," how

indescribable were the joys of that glorified one with the Saviour he had so fervently loved, and so firmly trusted, and of whom he had been able to say, when entering the dark valley, "The Lord is not only a Shepherd, but he is *my* Shepherd."

The other watchers by the triumphant death-bed of James Aitken, were his wife, his sister, and his faithful devoted missionary, Andrew Hamilton.

LETTERS, &c.

TO A FRIEND.

WRITTEN AFTER A SHORT ABSENCE FROM HIS FLOCK.

PAISLEY, 13th July, 1861.

MY DEAR —,— Though I have only been a week gone, there have been some deaths among my people, and some are now on the brink of the Jordan.

At my prayer-meeting on Thursday night, I ran over the first chapter of 1st Thessalonians, and enjoyed it much; it was your conversation upon it that suggested it to me. I spoke for a little on the "Work of faith" as the first degree in the Christian life; "Labour of love," as the second; (labour implies more than work); "Patience of hope," the third, combining the other two; and the "Waiting for the Son from heaven," the fourth and highest. I illustrated the last, by saying—we wait for a friend, when we have got all things ready for his arrival; before

that, we are only preparing. When speaking upon this, I felt painfully how far I was from the waiting position. After the meeting was over, I had interesting conversations with some who were anxious about their souls, and some who were rejoicing. One was very happy. The Lord had revealed her weakness to her, and now she was seeking strength.—Yours, etc.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, *July 29.*

I HAVE been attempting so to group in my mind the truths in 2 Cor. ii. 16, that I might be able to present them to my people on the Lord's-day. In that verse I see the double working of the gospel, which is either a curse or a blessing. To some it is the savour of life unto life, to others of death unto death. How best to illustrate this truth I don't yet see. It is a very solemn, nay, startling, thought that a man standing and preaching Christ is a blessing and a curse to the congregation. This truth was seen in the life of Jesus, and was proclaimed by His lips. His visit to Samaria, a blessing; to Capernaum, a curse. His preaching and miracles, in like manner, were a blessing to the publican and harlot, and a curse to the all-righteous Pharisee. And so with the apostles and every gospel minister. Oh, that I may be enabled to present the truth so plainly that all may see it, and so pointedly that all may feel it. Every sermon I preach, and every sermon that my people hear, must

be to them and to me either a blessing or a curse. With what different feelings we should go up to the house of prayer were we realising this truth.

I just write to you in snatches of my time. It is pleasant to write about one's troubles and difficulties as they pass through the mind. My mind is still running upon my text. Something like the following will be the kind of thread of my discourse—Viewing the two sides of the gospel as that which makes known damnation and salvation—heaven and hell—the come, ye blessed, and depart, ye cursed—the love of God in sending Jesus to die, and then sending Him to judge; then I shall dwell a little on the double working of the gospel, hardening and melting, enlightening and blinding, as the sun hardeneth the clay and melteth the wax, or as its bright shining blinds the weak eye, while the strong eye sees every object clearly by the same light. How strange that the gospel should injure any one, yet it is so. Then I suppose I must answer such an objection as the following:—If the gospel is to be a curse to many, would it not be better to leave it alone—not to preach it at all—would it not be better that God had never given it? A thousand times no. Because the sun does scorch and wither, would it be better to blot it out of the heavens?

Because the wind sometimes comes with a furious blast, would it be better there was no wind? and so on. Because the love and mercy of God are abused by the wicked, because they scorn the gift of salvation, and so add to their eternal bitterness, were it better that there should be no song of redeeming love heard in heaven, no death-bed triumphs, no rejoicing at the graves of loved ones, but a wide, eternal gloom? And then I shall conclude with an urgent appeal to the children of the King to lift up their heads and let their lights burn, and to the others not to curse themselves, but at once yield to the Lord Jesus as their Sovereign.

I have given you the first crude thoughts on the subject, as they have passed through my mind before putting them on paper.

I have often thought of preaching from Malachi iii. 16. Christian communion is the great want of the day. This is no doubt partly owing to our being afraid of shams; so many try to speak the language of Canaan, and not only try, but succeed wonderfully. There is no persecution just now to winnow the chaff; and, on the other hand, some of the children of the kingdom are so inconsistent in their conduct that they are shunned as deceivers. But, oh, when two or three souls meet together, and

have Christian communion, little wonder they cannot think of separating.

Friday morning.—Last night I had a delightful meeting. There were some anxious souls present. When I had just opened the meeting with praise, a dear brother minister came in, and took the greater part of the service for me. I spoke a few words about walking worthy of God, and every word was condemning myself.

How forcibly I felt this morning that word from the Christian Year—"Cold while he kindled others' love." I felt as if I were like the lump of ice a man once took and formed into a burning-glass, by which he kindled a match. I often am very cold, and yet God uses me as a blessing to others. What pangs that soul must have who preaches the gospel, and yet does not accept it!

Saturday night.—This afternoon I went to Glasgow with some of my Bible-class and their friends. We numbered upwards of two hundred. Our visit was to the Glasgow Cathedral. You would have been much amused had you seen me walking along the street with my large family; and when in the Cathedral, as they clustered round me, I fancied I felt something as a hen does with an unusually large brood of chickens—very proud, and very anxious.

We sang some psalms and hymns; and as there were a number of visitors in the Cathedral, you can easily imagine how quickly we became "the observed of all observers."

May you have a blessed day to-morrow; sweet and refreshing be the communion season. The Lord cheer you with His smile, and speak peace to your soul.

Monday morning.—How quickly the Sabbath passes, and then comes the usual round of the week's bustle. What a blessing the Sabbath is, breaking in upon the cares and sorrows of the week, and enabling us to remember that there are eternal realities! I have been speaking so much about myself and the work that your letter is not yet answered. I have not had time to think over the passages you named, my mind being pre-occupied. Yesterday the Lord did help me. The congregation was unusually large, and during the whole delivery very still.

TO THE SAME.

IN ANSWER TO SOME REMARKS ON THE LATTER PART OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

PAISLEY, *August 12.*

LOOKING at the close of the fourth, and the whole of the fifth chapter of 1 Thessalonians, don't you think the aim of the apostle is to lift up the souls of the Thessalonians to the Unseen, by fixing their thoughts on the certainty of the event, and the uncertainty of the time of Christ's coming. The fifth chapter is, so to speak, the practical application of the whole subject.

Saturday.—To-morrow I intend to lecture on the third part of the 119th Psalm, and preach from Luke xiv. 19. Open your Bible at the 119th Psalm, and I will try and give some thoughts that are not yet on paper. "Deal bountifully." To those who look upon Christianity from without there are many seeming paradoxes. In the child of God there is boldness in approaching the throne, mingled with humility. Strength and weakness, joy and sorrow, are strangely commingled. Here, for example, we

might at first sight be apt to think there was something of presumption, but a little closer insight shows that it springs from the very opposite, namely, a consciousness of his own emptiness. "That I may live." This is a personal question. Was he not living before this? Was it not that he might now live for a proper object, and in a right manner? What is the object of life? How this should banish all indifference! "Keep thy word." It is to be the guide of life. "Open mine eyes." Personal experience teaches us the necessity of this, when we see so many whom the world calls wise and great stumbling over the plainest testimony of Scripture. "Wondrous things." There were many even in David's day. There was the reality of forgiveness, as shown on the great day of atonement, the mercy and majesty of Jehovah, the yearning for the seed of the woman—the promised Shiloh—the star that was to come out of Jacob. How many more in our day, when we can stand by the manger-cradle, the gory cross, and the empty tomb! And just as the Jew of old looked forward, so do we, to the coming of Christ, not now as the Sacrifice, but as the Sovereign. "I am a stranger in the earth." This is the heart language of the brethren wherever they be; not only of those far away, but of those at

home. Nay, often at one's own hearth the heart can say—

“I am but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home;
Earth is a desert drear,
Heaven is my home;
Danger and sorrow stand
Round me on every hand,
Heaven is my fatherland,
Heaven is my home.”

“Hide not Thy commandments.” They are our guide-book and chart. Bridges calls the pilgrim spirit the pulse of the soul. I look upon the 20th verse as the point of the prayer and meditation contained in the three former verses. Here in the 20th verse is the soul-thirst for God's Word, and this is the Lord dealing bountifully, showing us our great need; the more we know of our own ignorance, darkness, and helplessness, the more do we yearn for light and help from God. But what a high state of Christian attainment to be able to say, “At all times!”

Verse twenty-one begins the second section of this part. “Thou hast rebuked the proud that are cursed.” The history of the Bible shows this—Cain, Sodom, Pharaoh, etc. Pride is the opposite of

all that Christ teaches. The first word in the Sermon on the Mount is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." This is the first requisite in the Christian soldier. We are to take His yoke and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly. How far, then, do the proud err from His ways! "Remove from me reproach and contempt." Reproach is bearable, but who can bear the sting of contempt. Was David thinking of the occurrence mentioned in 2 Samuel vi. 16 when he wrote the word contempt. Verse twenty-three gives a striking contrast between Saul and his courtier sitting talking against David, and David alone in some mountain cave meditating on the statutes of the Lord. Verse twenty-four is the fruit of that meditation. I won't say anything about Luke xiv. 19, but now very earnestly ask for your prayers for me at this time. To-morrow I preach thrice; Monday twice; Tuesday I go to Aberdeen to preach on Wednesday and Thursday; Friday, return home; Saturday, prepare for Sabbath. May the Lord strengthen me in all these undertakings, for the comforting of His own children, and the rousing of the ungodly.

I am afraid the revival movement is getting too fashionable. What an amount of good the Methodists did in England, while laughed at and despised.

Those who are carrying on an offensive warfare are never considered respectable—they are enthusiasts. The world wishes us to be always acting on the defensive. This defensive warfare is the besetting sin of the Church; she has the sword of the Spirit in her hand, and should use it.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, 24th August.

MANY of the children of the King make sad havoc of their happiness and usefulness in the world by being joined to those who cannot understand their circumstances. It is only the soul that is born again, and that is really struggling against a principle of evil within, that can understand how a Christian desires good and loves it, and yet has to groan on account of evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Only a Christian can understand how a brother or sister may be truthful in their profession, and yet so miserable in their practice.

Next week I am to preach in Glasgow on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—twice each day.

I enjoyed my visit to Aberdeen, and I did not enjoy it. There now is one of those inconsistencies which to some would appear a flat contradiction. I enjoyed seeing a town which is really worth seeing. I enjoyed, and could not but enjoy, the kindness of Dr P——; but my soul was not enjoying communion with God, and therefore you can easily

understand why I did not feel happy. But this week at Saltcoats I was happy, happy; my soul very near the Lord.

For next Sabbath my text is, "Jesus wept." I have fixed upon it with a trembling heart, knowing that such a subject is far above my grasp; but may the Lord show His glory through my weakness. Why did Jesus weep? I do not think the answer, that He sympathized with the sisters, is the correct one. Verse forty-six, I think, explains it in some degree. He was about to perform His mightiest miracle, but in the hearts of some it only resulted in more opposition, and deeper unbelief. The other place where Jesus is said to have wept was over Jerusalem, and there the cause of His tears was the same unbelief. This, then, I intend to make the subject of discourse—Unbelief the cause of the Redeemer's tears.

TO THE SAME.

WRITTEN IN ANSWER TO A LETTER IN WHICH HE WAS ASKED
HIS OPINION OF THE MEANING OF 1 PETER III. 18-20.

PAISLEY, 31st August.

Now let us look together at 1 Peter iii. 18-20. Read the three verses as if they were one, and the difficult nineteenth verse becomes plain. It says, "By which," *i.e.*, by the Spirit, "He also went and preached." Now, the question is, When did Christ preach? "When once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Christ preached before the flood through Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness. But we know the spirits did not hear him; they laughed at Noah, his preaching, and his work. Where are those spirits *now*? In prison. I do not know if I make myself understood, but I take the passage simply to mean, that Christ preached through Noah to the Antediluvians, and that they, rejecting Christ, have been cast into prison, *i.e.*, perdition. What a solemn thought, that there are spirits *now* in prison, while we live and move upon the earth, speaking about Jesus,

listening to the gospel! These souls are now cast out, because they have refused that gospel—rejected that Christ.

When I was in Glasgow I saw Miss S—— listening to me in the Queen's Rooms. I gave a few thoughts from my sermon on "Jesus wept."

The same evening I had a most interesting conversation with a young German lady who remained after the meeting to have a word of conversation with me. It is all one what country we belong to, our hearts are the same.

When I heard the young lady trying to express in English, "The cold heart to Jesus," "No comfort," "No peace," I could not tell with what pleasure I listened to her. I then tried to direct her thoughts away from comfort, peace, loving, feeling, and all that would lead her to look into herself, and spoke of Jesus' love and willingness to save. My soul gave thanks as I saw her eye brightening, and the intelligent expression that passed over her features.

I preach in Glasgow to-morrow, so that I have not two new sermons to prepare, as I shall re-deliver some that I already well know; but instead of being pleased at this, I would far rather be at home busy with thoughts to give my own folk on the morrow.

I expect to be in Greenock next week at the open air services, and that, I think, will conclude my wanderings for this summer. I should like to get a fortnight's rest somewhere, but the communion is at hand, and meetings with the young communicants will keep me at home.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, 7th September.

I WAS shocked to hear of Mr ——'s awfully sudden death. Such events teach us that we should *live* in the full assurance of faith.

This week has been a sort of blank, and that not for the want of moving about. I preached in Glasgow on Sabbath, in Greenock on Tuesday and Wednesday, and here on Thursday. In Greenock there were some interesting meetings which I enjoyed very much. But I am about knocked up, and must try to slip away and have a rest somewhere. To-day I am not at all well, just the result of a little too much preaching.

One of my elders died on Tuesday, an old man of seventy years; one who clearly apprehended his own nothingness, and his need of a Saviour, and, I believe, rested with simple, sincere faith on the Beloved. He had many trials in his lifetime—bereavement, loss of money, folly of relatives; but he had a faithful daughter, who has been the solace of his declining years; after the death of his wife she did all

for him. How oft have wives and daughters been thus the light that has cheered the desponding in many a dark hour of affliction.

In Greenock, however, I was stopped by a man who had heard me preaching. He was almost in despair—his wife drank—his sins stared him in the face. When he read his Bible, his eye always fell on the threatenings. The poor fellow was in a most wretched condition. Oh, that the Lord would come and put all to rights; for, alas! what abounding iniquity there is on every hand!

Your letters call to my remembrance the weekly epistles of my dear sister, who went home a little before your mother. What if they know each other just now, and have intercourse in that holy home, while we have such poor, limited communion here below.

TO THE SAME.

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER WRITTEN AFTER HEARING A
SERMON ON 1 COR. II. 9, 10.

PAISLEY.

MR ——'s view of the text is similar to mine, though it is very often explained as referring to heaven; but if you glance at the following verse you will see that the things which eye hath not seen God hath revealed unto us, and thus we are taught what glorious, soul-enrapturing things may be enjoyed on earth. Alas! how far we are from this! Oh, for a single eye to look upwards; and the more we have the Spirit revealing to us, the more we shall learn of the inconceivableness of the joy and glory of heaven, when we find that we have no words to express that of earth.

To-night I have come home from my prayer-meeting with very mingled feelings—joy over some, and deep sorrow over others. I do feel very weak. I can stand in my pulpit and rejoice with them; but when there is a backsliding, when the cause of

Christ is wounded by those who call themselves His friends, it does pain me.

One in whom I have never had much confidence, and to whom I have administered not a few quiet words of admonition, after loudly professing, has brought scandal upon herself and others. She is not what one would call vicious, but has a furious temper when roused, and not a few appear very willing to try their best to accomplish that same, and are then too glad to send forth the story of what she has said and done highly coloured. Another, and still more painful, case of backsliding is that of a poor girl whom I strove to save from ruin. Fair in person; down, down she fell, and I found her in the Infirmary. I tried again and again to teach her; but when she left I trembled for her; she was building on the strength of her own resolutions. Yesterday I found her in the street, with other poor, degraded wretches, out to do the devil's work, damning their own souls.

Oh, and I can sit quietly, and move about, and laugh, and talk, and yet I know the awful truth, that the devil has his followers tramping on to eternal ruin, and taking as many as they can along with them. Oh, for a soul devoted to God and His work! I feel as if I were an iceberg. Oh, for the fire, fire

from on high, that my heart might burn with zeal for the cause of Christ! Is not life a serious matter? We are here for a little influencing those about us, who are so soon to be away for ever.

May the Lord bring good out of all seeming evil. I am too easily made to despond. The Lord give me strength and prudence. Your thought on the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer is new to me, but I sympathize with it. Did you ever notice a resemblance between the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments—referring first to God, then to ourselves and our neighbours, and guarding us against the appearance of evil?

(Referring to a husband and wife who had lived long and happily together, and whom the hand of death was about to separate.) How deep their affection must be for each other, and how intimate they must be with each other's modes of thinking! Soul-intercourse with such must, I suppose, more nearly resemble that above than in any other condition of life. How awful, then, for a Christian to be yoked to an unbeliever, one who is a perfect stranger to all the feelings of the renewed soul, whether of joy or sorrow. I sometimes feel it with companions and relatives; what must it be with a wife or with a husband? Next week I have to call

for three newly-married couples; one of them, at all events, I believe to be a brother and sister in the Lord. The husband is a young man with whom I have had much spiritual intercourse, and the wife a young lady who has lately found peace in believing.

Saturday.—To-morrow (D.V.) my text is to be Jehovah-Nissi, Exod. xvii. 15. Introduction, showing that the wilderness was a school-room for the children of Israel. 1st head. The banner gathers and guides. 2d. It separates and declares what party we belong to. 3d. It protects those who seek its shelter. 4th. It is the symbol of triumphant joy—"He brought me into his banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love." Last, The personal possession, *my* banner.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, 28th *September*.

How truly I can sympathize with you in regard to these two words, Mother and Home, for I feel as though I had neither. My mother entered a few years before yours the home above; and since my dear sister's marriage and death I feel homeless. I have the feeling as though I were in some other body's house, and that by and bye I shall be going home. My house, in spite of myself, I look upon more as business premises than a home.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, 14th *September*.

MY lecture is on the 6th part of the 119th Psalm. I take up Christian experience as the illustration of the thoughts penned by the Psalmist.

My sermon is on 2 Tim. i. 10, dwelling chiefly on Christ bringing life to light. Mankind, before Christ came, were in the dark as to the true aim or object of life. In my introduction I take up, as the types of mankind, the four great cities—Rome, the military; Athens, the literary; Corinth, the commercial; Jerusalem, what now-a-days we should call the High Church. Then I take up the life of Christ—its seeming failures, born in a stable, the companion of the poor and distressed, dying the death of shame. Then the fruit of that life, what already, even on earth, it has produced, and what will be our estimate of it when we stand at the portals of Heaven, and view the million millions of the redeemed.

Now, what Christ's life was, such ours ought to be—a life of obedience to the Father's will, and

trust in the Father's plans, even though we be led through a Gethsemane up to a Calvary, and even when there is no light to trust Him who is and ever shall be truth. And now I bring in a few thoughts on immortality. My conclusion is a direct appeal to all, asking them, For what are you living?

Since I last wrote to you my soul has been refreshed by finding a number of my congregation in deep spiritual anxiety; among the number two married men—fathers.

Still keep your heart lifted up for me. You remember the line in the "Morte d'Arthur," by Tennyson:—

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than the world dreams of;
Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day."

Last Sabbath my text was, "We all do fade as a leaf," 1st. "We," it is a personal thing. 2d. "All," it is universal. 3d. "Do fade," present reality, just now life is passing. 4th. "As a leaf," the rapidity and certainty of the fading. You see the subject branches out very naturally.

Sometimes I think my letters are fearfully egotistical; but you will not think so, I hope, for

though they are all about what is engaging my own attention, yet I am sure you sympathize with me in my work, or far rather the Lord's work. Still it is difficult to keep down *self*, and look only to the Saviour; and the more you are used, the more danger you run.

TO THE SAME.

PAISLEY, *October 5, 1861.*

LAST night a dear child of God, and close follower of the Lamb, was telling me, with tears in his eyes, of the joys of his married life. His partner was his remembrancer. She knew well how that, without communion with his God, he was weak and helpless, and used to draw him aside from care and business, to be alone with her at the footstool. Their hearts loved and rejoiced in being *anything* for Christ. And when so poor that they knew not where their supplies were to come from, she cheered his spirits and strengthened his weak faith, so that he has been able to do a wondrous work for the Lord. But she has been taken, and now he is closing his pilgrimage alone, and his daily prayer and cry is, "Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee." "E'en though it be a cross that raiseth me."

TO A FAVOURITE NIECE.

GLASGOW, 25th Sept., 1865.

MY EVER-BELOVED —,—I think we said something to each other about telling how we were getting on in Christ's path. *

I have, I think, been advancing a little since the last night you were in Binnie Place. I think Christ saw that I was going to be a dull scholar, so about a month after we got to Rome, He laid me down, as it were, at the side of the grave, so that I might look at death calmly, steadily, and whether I would or no. Dear M——, it was kind, kind in my Lord to do this; and since that first time I have often had to do the same. One lesson I have been taught, and, I trust, well learned, is, that Christ, Christ is the only refuge. The clearer, the simpler our views of Christ, the more peaceful is the soul. Another lesson which I think both H—— and I have learnt is, to think less of the world than ever; that is, dear M——, we never now think of what this and that person will say about us, but what will Christ say; all we desire to do is to please Christ. We

often make mistakes, and not seldom forget, yet now, more than ever, Christ is our rule, our life, our joy.

How sweet the thought! Your heart is a place where Christ sometimes dwells, and, were we walking aright, should always dwell.

As to my bodily health, it is still very feeble; but I ask God to give me all the more of His own power to carry on the spiritual work.

There are a great many young men in Glasgow who are giving themselves to the Lord, and rejoicing in Him, wondering at their former blindness and folly.

I do not know what more to write about, dear M——; indeed, I only care to use my pen for and about Christ; and my soul is longing to hear how it is with your soul.

A LETTER TO MY CONGREGATION ON THE SABBATH QUESTION.

MY DEARLY-BELOVED FLOCK,—I have been and am oft asked, “What do you think of the Sabbath Question?”—and then often follows such a string of queries about walking, using cabs, reading books, running trains, and so on, that one might almost imagine himself to be under the shadow of Sinai, and its thunders still echoing in his ears, instead of living when the “shadow of good things to come” has given place to the reality.

Against all this kind of conversation I would most earnestly protest. It takes away the mind from what may be called the very soul of the subject, and while disputing about the letter the spirit is altogether lost; so that people are apt to look upon the Lord’s-day very much as the day when this is to be done and that is not to be done—when one set of actions take the place of another. I am afraid that many who consider themselves staunch supporters of the Sabbath-day are doing much against it from the line of conduct they thus pur-

sue, because, losing sight of the spirit in their anxiety about the letter, they not only have the opposition of the irreligious, but many Christians who are rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free are turning away from the observance of the Lord's-day, as if it were a trace of legality they should wipe out.

This is most deeply to be deplored. It causes my heart to sink in sadness. Truly this is not the time to loosen our hold of that heaven-provided bulwark which is so oft and so viciously assailed at the present time. Dearly-beloved, let us most prayerfully and humbly consider this question—

“What is the Lord's-day to us as Christians?”

I believe most firmly that when we see the true answer we shall find there is nothing against the fulness of the gospel dispensation in the observance of the Lord's-day, but the very opposite; and that the surest way to preserve the sanctity of that day is to know and preserve the spirit of the day.

Now, in seeking to answer correctly the above question, let us consider what we are taught by the observance of the first Sabbath in Eden. It is most simply told us in the first three verses of the second chapter of Genesis, “On the seventh day God ended His work.” This does not mean that God did any

work on that seventh day, but yet it marks out that day as having a peculiar relationship to all that goes before. Now, what was that relationship? It was not anything about man's work or man's rest, for he had done no work. He was the last work of creative wisdom on the last part of the last working day. What, then, is the meaning of God ending His work on the seventh day, when no work was done? The meaning is very obvious. The doing of no work on the seventh day, the resting of God from all His work on the seventh day, was stamping the six days' work with the mark of perfection. There was nothing wanting. The eye of the all-seeing, the all-wise Jehovah, gazed on His work of creation, and was perfectly satisfied: "And, behold, it was very good." The seal of all this to Adam was the observance of the seventh day. This day to him marked the completion of creation work. Carefully mark that man's first day was entering into the rest of creation work. Man at once enters into the fullness, the completion, of creation work.

Now, if there be a work as great as, or greater than creation work, how would the completion of that work be marked out in a better way than by the change of *Sabbath* to the day that marked the *perfection* of that work? As the seventh day marks

the completion of creation work, so the eighth day—i.e., the first day of the week, when the seal was broken and the stone was rolled away, and Christ rose from the tomb—marks the *perfection* of the redemptive work of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

What a treasure-house of joyful meditation is thus opened up to us! As Adam was not called upon to create the tiniest insect or the smallest grain of matter to complete the creation work of God, so, in like manner, however vile, or depraved, or worthless, yea, or however excellent our moral life be, we are not called upon to do one iota of redemption work. That was done, could only be done, by our Divine Redeemer.

However carelessly any one may pass through God's world, yet the most careless, when he comes for one moment to realise what creation work means, confesses he is unable to create anything, however small or insignificant it may be. The seventh day taught this to Adam—viz., that God alone could create, and that He had perfected creation work. True, Adam might daily in his work and in his thought enter more and more into the wonders of creation work, and be ever rising up to a louder, holier strain in his ascriptions of praise to the all-

wise and holy Jehovah, who hath made all things beautiful; but while all this might be true, while he was thus daily more and more praising the Lord, so was he ever daily knowing more and more the Lord alone could create, and that the Lord *hath* completed creation work. This the seventh day ever told him. Now, just so should the eighth day, the Lord's-day, be to us. However lightly any of us may think of sin—the thoughts, the word, the act, done and gone, and seemingly no trace behind. Alas! how sin on sin passes by in fearful succession, with as little thought on our part as the man who passes along the path thinks of creative power calling each atom into being. Yet, when the eye is opened to consider sin, who can remove it? who can take away the slightest taint of guilt? The word that was carelessly allowed to slip—the moment that was allowed to pass unburdened with good, and is now irrevocably past—who has the power to make any of these things be as if they never had been? How utterly hopeless any such thing is on our part!

You ask a man to create an atom; he tells you, You might as well ask me to create a world. The one is as impossible as the other. So may we reply about sin. We are no more able to remove the

slightest transgression, than we are able to make ourselves spotlessly pure in the presence of an omniscient Jehovah.

Now, what is the doctrine taught by the Lord's-day, the eighth day? This is a question which has but to be asked, and the mind of every Christian may joyfully behold the complete parallelism between the seventh day, the Eden Sabbath, and the eighth or Lord's-day; as the former proclaimed the completion and perfection of creation work, so the latter not less clearly proclaims aloud to the wide world the completion, the perfection, of redemption work.

True, every day we may be learning more and more the wonders of redeeming grace; the tenderness, the sympathy, the yearning of Christ's heart for the lost, the wondrous eternal glories He hath purchased for the redeemed. We may be ever realising more and more the fulness of the rest Jesus hath secured,—rest from the burden of sin's guilt, and rest from the tyranny of sin's power. But while thus scholars of what has been done for us, we cannot be said to have done anything in that glorious finished work. We but enter into the rest of the Redeemer as Adam into the rest of the Creator.

It is but right that I should now bring before you

the proof from Scripture for the doctrine I have thus stated. In attempting to do so I must leave much unnoticed that I should like to bring forward, because a volume instead of a letter would be required to state all fully. I hope, that though briefly, yet clearly and convincingly, the joyful doctrine taught by the eighth, the Lord's-day, will be brought to the heart and mind of every reader. We have seen that the seventh day marks the completion of creation work; all Christians look upon the resurrection as the sign of the completion of redemption work. These two things I take for granted that we are all agreed upon; and now, in bringing forward proof from Scripture, may the Spirit of Jesus guide us into all truth.

When we consider the doctrine taught by the eighth day as one that may be called the very corner stone of the gospel, it is natural to expect that the traces of it should be numerous, and that it is so I now proceed to show. It is well known that eight is the resurrection number, and oft so used, as will be seen in the following illustrations.

(1.) Noah, who is a type of the risen Saviour, is called in a special manner the Eighth, 2 Pet. ii. 5. It is not easy to express in English the numeral adjective that is used in this verse as qualifying the

name of Noah, but all who have the slightest acquaintance with the original can see at a glance the special manner in which it is used. I need not tarry to show in how many ways this type foreshadows the Anti-type, but proceed to others, if not less known, yet less dwelt upon.

(2.) Aaron, Israel's high-priest, is the type of our High-Priest, who hath entered within the veil for us. It is most interesting to read in Lev., chapters viii. and ix., how Aaron was perfected for his office. And not only is it interesting, it is most instructive; and good would it be for us all to read the gospel page by the lamp lit at the altar fire. There is but one point, however, in these two chapters for me to bring before my readers, namely, that it was the *eighth day* that marked the perfection of Aaron for the high-priest's office. Seven days did he abide at the door of the tabernacle, but on the eighth day he came forth and offered the offerings unto the Lord, and coming out of the tabernacle, "blessed the people: and the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces." How clearly all this points out to us restored com-

munion with our God through the risen, living Redeemer.

(3.) Take in connection with this what is taught in the prophecy of Ezekiel xliii. 25-27. Every one who knows anything of the signification of the various sacrifices cannot but be struck with the words, "upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord God." It is well known that the two offerings here named are typical of devotion to, and communion with, Jehovah. They could only be offered when the way was prepared by the sin and trespass-offerings removing guilt. This prophecy teaches the perfection of the redeeming work—the work of removing sin. This is shown by the *seven* days' offering of the sin-offering—the *seven* days' purging of the altar. And now comes the mark of a new relationship between God and His people, in the new offerings on the new, the eighth day. This was to continue, for the words of Scripture are, "and so forward;" that is, so on continually is that day, the eighth day, to be observed.

(4.) Gen. xvii. 12, and Lev. xii. 3—"And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised." Here we have again this eighth day marking out the new

relationship to God—the entering into communion with God, just as we were taught in the previous illustration.

(5) Exodus xxii. 30—“Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days shall it be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.”

(6.) Lev. xiv. and xv. The laws concerning cleansing. In these laws this same eighth day comes into prominence, marking out as before a reviving—an entering into restored fellowship with God. “On the eighth day.”

(7.) And now, not to weary you, my dear flock, I would only ask you to consider one other illustration from the Old Testament. There are others which every Bible student may easily find out for himself, and by so doing he will remember them and enjoy them all the more, and yet there is one other which is so important that it cannot be passed over. The feast of first-fruits, as mentioned in Lev. xxiii. 9–14. We find in the second chapter of Leviticus that there was a first-fruits which might be offered on the altar by fire, and that there was a first-fruits which might not be offered by fire. The English reader might imagine that there was a kind of contradiction in this second chapter, but a slight know-

ledge of the original at once explains it. The first-fruit, being "green ears of corn dried by the fire—corn beaten out of full ears." This offering *might be burnt* on the altar. But the first-fruit, being the first sheaf of the harvest field, as shown in Lev. xxiii. 10, was *not* to be burnt. We read concerning it—"He," *i.e.*, the priest, "shall wave the sheaf before the Lord."

Now for a moment consider, my dearly-beloved flock, why this careful distinction between the one kind of first-fruits and the other. What do these two kinds typify? Let the Scriptures answer. The first chapter of Leviticus is concerning the burnt-offering, which shows to us Christ in His entire devotedness to the Father's will, thus taking the place that the first Adam lost, which He, as the second Adam, took, and all things connected therewith completely fulfilled. The second chapter is in the closest connection with the first, and shows the perfection of Christ's character as the second Adam, typically in the meat-offering. But now comes the question, What then is meant by the first-fruits not to be burnt? Let the Apostle answer (1 Cor. xv. 20): "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Here, then, we see clearly, in the first-fruits not to be burnt, a most striking type of the risen Redeemer.

How precious are these Old Testament types, so full, brimful, of gospel truth? Picture to yourselves the Israelite of old going to his harvest field—cutting down the first ripe sheaf—bringing it to the door of the tabernacle—giving it to his priest to wave before the Lord. This sheaf is not burned, for it has passed through death: it is the type of Him who is our new life without sin in God. When was all this to take place? Was there any set time for this ordinance? How striking the answer from Scripture—“ON THE MORROW AFTER THE SABBATH THE PRIEST SHALL WAVE IT.” How quickly the mind calls up the New Testament words that seem like an echo of this old law in Leviticus! “And when the Sabbath was past.” “Very early in the morning, the first day of the week.” “As it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.” “Now, upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning.” Then in John’s Gospel we read of Christ coming to the assembled disciples on “the first day of the week,” and then “after eight days again.” How clearly we see what has been foretold in the Old Testament fulfilled in the New.

The offerings upon the day when the wave sheaf was brought into the tabernacle were to be the same as those mentioned in *Ezekiel xliii. 27*. And thus

we have the feast of first-fruits foreshadowing the resurrection Sabbath and our new relationship to God in a living Saviour.

(8.) The illustrations from the New Testament, as to the Lord's-day, are so well known to every Christian, that, in conclusion, I will take up but one—namely, Rev. i. 10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day." The only seeming difficulty in this quotation is that the "Lord's" in the original is an adjective, not a noun, so that one might be apt to think no argument could be based on this quotation for the observance of the Lord's-day. A little inquiry, however, into the meaning of the word proves the very opposite. This adjective is only used in one other place in the New Testament, and there its meaning is clear beyond dispute, teaching us that it is applied to what specially belongs to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 20, "to eat the Lord's Supper." This leads us to apply the word in the same manner to the day mentioned, Rev. i. 10.

We have no need to prove at any length what day is here meant. The first-fruits, *not burnt*, teach us; it is the "morrow after the Sabbath." The prophecy in Ezekiel teaches us the same thing, when it tells of the sinless offering presented on the "eighth day," and so forward. The Lord Jesus Himself foretells

it in Mark ii., where He so plainly teaches of the changes in forms and days. The gospels tell me that it was "the first day of the week," and on "eight days after."

How little heed, then, need you pay to those, my dearly-beloved flock, who so loudly and so boastingly tell us there is no teaching in Scripture for the change of the one day in seven to be given to the Lord. Can they be honest Bible students? I have tried to tell as briefly as possible what the Lord's-day is to us as Christians—the day that proclaims a complete redemption in Christ, a new life with God our Father through the risen, living Redeemer. The facts, the words of Scripture, have been brought forward as proofs.

And now, there is but one other point I would bring before you, or rather, it is one that is constantly brought before me, and is in a great measure the cause of this letter being written—namely, the question, "How am I to observe the Lord's-day?" There is, however, a question that comes before it, Can you observe the Lord's-day? To help each of you, beloved flock, to answer this question, all that goes before of this letter has been written.

You now know the meaning of the Lord's-day, you are acquainted with its doctrine,—have you,

then, passed from death unto life? Do you know, not a dead, but a living Jesus? Has He risen again for *your* justification? In one word, are you converted—regenerated—born again? Have you cast yourself with a simple trust on Jesus as your all-sufficient and alone Saviour?

See how this "Morrow after the Sabbath," this "Eighth day," this "Lord's-day," comes to the very root of the matter within us. Let not the question, How am I to observe, hide from you the more important, yea, all-important question, Can I observe the Lord's-day? For how can one observe that day while he is yet a stranger to salvation? How can he rejoice in redemption work when he knows not whether his sins be blotted out, or whether they be as mountain-barriers between him and his God?

Should any one read these thoughts on the Lord's-day who hath not yet sought the sure refuge in Jesus, now at once let me implore him, without tarrying, to look to Christ as his Saviour. I say to him most distinctly, you cannot truly enjoy the Lord's-day till you know the Lord as your Beloved. Till then you need not wonder that the Day of days is a weariness to you. But has the reader looked to Christ? Is He truly yours, and are you His? Then is the Lord's-day a delight, that tells of perfect

freedom, the guilt of sin for ever blotted out, the power of sin's tyranny broken, lost communion restored, at the Father's right hand a living, elder Brother who is coming again.

How, then, are we as Christians to observe the Lord's-day? All that has gone before suggests the answer, namely, by seeking and enjoying communion with God. This is the root principle of all true Sabbath observance, and gives the right answer to all such queries as, "May I do this, or may I do that on the Lord's-day?"

I am much afraid that many Christians break the fourth commandment when they think they are keeping it most strictly, by going through a round of what are called religious duties, but with scarce ever a thought as to personal communion with God.

Let me then entreat each one of you, most solemnly and earnestly, to make this the test of all your Sabbath observance, as it is or should be the aim of all our worship, whether private, social, or public. Should, then, the doing or the not doing of anything on that day hinder soul communion with God? that is what we should avoid.

The Eden Sabbath not only teaches us much as to the nature of the Lord's-day, but also as to how that day is to be observed. We may be sure when

Adam rested from dressing and keeping the garden of Eden on each seventh day, it was that he might enter into a closer and more direct communion with his Creator. And so was it with what we might call an Eden relic—the seventh day outside paradise—after the withering blight of sin had fallen upon our earth. For example, in Gen. iv. 3–7, we read of man seeking communion with his God on this same seventh day. The words of Scripture are, “and in process of time,” which literally translated reads, “at the division of days.” Now we have only to ask, what was this division of days? and I think every one who is unprejudiced will say it is the division already mentioned in the second chapter.

The other passages already referred to in this letter, especially Ezek. xliii. 27, and Lev. xxiii. 9, abundantly teach the same thing, namely, the Lord’s-day is to be for personal communion with God, through our risen Redeemer.

True, our souls should ever be in communion with God; but this is no argument against a special time for the concentration of our soul’s desires towards that object. Just as we ought to “pray without ceasing;” but that does not take away from us the necessity for having special seasons for prayer.

If in Eden our first parents had a day set apart

for holy communion ere sin had tainted their spotless souls, how much more do we need to have a day set apart for a like purpose.

Is it not true that as we are more with our God, in direct, personal, holy communion, so our spiritual vigour, our growth in grace, and our advancement in holiness are ever on the increase?

There is in our day a cry that is often raised, namely, "The church is ceasing to exercise any strong or permanent influence upon the present age, and that what influence is exercised is of a merely isolated and spasmodic character." There is more truth, I believe, in this than many Christians are willing to allow. But in what better, more effectual way can the church regain that true influence she ever ought to have, than by a right observance of the Lord's-day?

I believe this question as to the observance of the Lord's-day is one of primary importance just now, and would therefore most earnestly implore every brother and sister in the Lord to use the first day of the week—the Lord's-day—in seeking to enjoy personal communion with Him who died for our sins, rose for our justification, and is coming again to receive us to Himself!

Were we to look with more jealous care to this

kind of Sabbath observance, we should find the tide of holy love and zeal ever rising higher and higher in our congregations, and much that at present grieves God's children would soon be swept away.

Ere I lift my pen from my paper, again I implore every brother and sister to hallow the Lord's-day—the day that declares our freedom—the day that proclaims the finished work of Jesus—the day that specially teaches us as to restored communion! O! then, whatever should fall behind, let not your soul-communication fall behind on that day. It is the fore-taste of heaven—nay, it is heaven. For just as Palestine was on both sides the Jordan, so heaven is on both sides the river of death. As you honour your Saviour, as you desire to grow in grace, as you long to have spiritual power as a blessing for others, remember what is the true observance of the Lord's-day: SEEKING AND ENJOYING SOUL COMMUNION WITH OUR JEHOVAH. O that the Lord's people would do so! How much more of the Spirit's power and presence would be manifested.

That the Spirit may bless the truth in this letter to the strengthening and refreshing of your souls, is the earnest prayer of

Your affectionate Pastor,

J. A.

TO THE CONGREGATION OF ST. LUKE'S PARISH,
GLASGOW.

19 VIA CORO, ROME, 8th Dec., 1863.

MY BELOVED FLOCK,—Grace and peace be with you. In this land of darkness, intense spiritual darkness, it is a comfort to speak to you by pen and ink. I have been, and I am, both *home-sick* and *heart-sick* in the head-quarters of Popery. I have read much of what was to be seen in Rome, but I never realised till in it how awfully depraved the Church of Rome had become. Mingled feelings of *scorn*, *pity*, and *loathing* have filled my soul. Oh, that our countrymen but knew the mighty boon they possess in an open Bible and a free gospel. But, as your minister, and though far away, let me ask, What do you know of that open Bible and glorious gospel? Is the Bible your guide-book in living? Are your footsteps according to its teaching? If not, what then is the Bible to you?—*a condemnation*. Are you willing to accept its teaching in *all* its extent, or just such portions as you like? Oh, the evils that abound on every hand of me make

me ashamed of how little the Bible has been my daily guide! For now, more than ever, I see the value of the gift of a *revealed word*. And the gospel—oh, the value of a pure, unadulterated gospel!

But what personal connection is there between you and the gospel? You have heard the preachers preach the gospel from infancy. The words of salvation are as familiar to your ear as any household word. But what connection, what vital, living connection, is there between you and the glad tidings? If it be an awful, terrific thing to die eternally, how much more so with the truth ringing in your ears! Bear with me while, by letter, I beseech each one of you, for himself and herself, to make sure work about your personal state before Almighty God. Are you simply resting in the finished *work* of a *crucified, risen, exalted, and returning* Saviour?

My work is much more difficult and delicate than I thought it would have been. Most truly I am now a stranger in a strange land, and *not one* is there to stand by me. I am not only single-handed, but also my way appears to be hedged round in such a way as if I could do nothing whatever, either with one class or another. But I look upwards with hope, and I know He who hath aided me so oft in

various difficulties and trials will do so still; and though directly I should do nothing, the insight that I have had into the various tendencies of thought among our own people and others is most valuable and beyond price; and my prayer to God is that it may be used for His glory, and the furtherance of the gospel. There are many, many things I should like to say to you now about this place. But it will be better to defer till (God granting it) we see each other face to face. Your prayers, I hope, have oft been rising up before the throne of grace on behalf of your pastor.

Two Sabbath-days I have been absent from you, and they have been to me very dull and dreary days, and much was I in thought with you. On one of these days I was in the French Protestant Church in Marseilles. To me it was a most interesting sight to see gathered together a large congregation (in the midst of a Popish town) of those who worship God as we do. After the pastor gave out the Psalm, my blood began to tingle in my veins when *the congregation* sang. It was congregational singing, like the singing in St. Luke's. A simple and rather plaintive air they used in the singing, and *all sang*.

In the wall near to where I sat was a marble slab,

and cut on it these words, in the French language: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We spoke to some of the congregation after worship, or rather, some of the congregation spoke to us, and they were glad to see that an interest was taken in them and in their cause.

When we left Marseilles we had the feeling, as if the last link that joined us to home was broken, and we were now on the troublous waters of the Mediterranean.

After two nights and a day of a most disagreeable journey (very weak and ill) we arrived at Civita Vecchia on the shores of Italy. The first greeting we had was from an old beggar woman, and a little girl at her side, who craved earnestly for alms; they were but the first of many engaged in a similar occupation, and who accompanied us to our hotel. Here in Civita Vecchia soldiers and beggars appeared to be the staple of the population. The beggars were the natives of the country, but the soldiers were foreigners. How my own country and her blessings at every step came into my mind, and yet, while I rejoiced more than ever in being a native of Scotland, I felt that neither I nor the people at home valued our privileges, or understood our responsibilities.

Without doubt many of the Italians feel keenly their position, and long earnestly for another state of things, but, alas, I am afraid they are taking the wrong method. Oh, that I could point all to the future, to eternity, to Jesus, and seeing all things in the light of the Sun of Righteousness, all would live as brethren. All are wanting happiness, all are wanting soul-satisfaction, and some think it is in political liberty, some think it is in riches, and so on. Oh, that they would first seek the kingdom of heaven, then should other things be added. Many among our countrymen at home take an altogether erroneous view of the state of this country. Let us who name the name of Christ remember there is one thing needful for the soul's salvation, and that is neither political freedom, nor national glory, nor abundance of peace, but a personal, living union with the Lord Jesus Christ, our true and only Redeemer.

I feel still the fatigue of my journey hither, and will not at this time write to you at any greater length, but only once more ask you to remember me at the throne of grace, and pray that my work here may not be in vain. You are in both my sleeping and waking thoughts. I miss much all the various works in which I was engaged in your midst, and,

not without a little sadness, I meditate on all the different plans I had formed for the winter months, so that they might be profitable to all. I beseech every child of God, for the love they have for their Redeemer, not to let the minister's absence hinder the glorious work. Pray much for him who is in my place, cheer him in the work. Be kindly affectionate one towards another. Bear the one with the other. Let everything like self-seeking be trampled under foot; and in all you do, as before the Lord, see that it be done with a single eye to His glory. Keep everything that would tend to lead the mind from Jesus away from church, prayer-meetings, and schools; and God grant that we may work together for the glory of His name. And now may the God of peace, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you with every blessing, spiritual and temporal, now and evermore.

I remain,

Your Servant in the Lord Jesus,

JAMES AITKEN.

TO THE SAME.

ROME, 15th January, 1864.

MY DEARLY-BELOVED CONGREGATION, — Grace, mercy, and peace, be with you; and God grant that soon it may be my privilege to speak to you face to face, as was my wont, and mutually to comfort and strengthen each other in the earthly pilgrimage with the everlasting consolations of the gospel.

It was with deep sorrow I learned that sickness and death have been visiting some of your households. In one home a father, in another a mother, in a third a child, and some of these deaths were sudden, and unlooked for. Let not the warning pass unheeded, but as in the presence of God, say to yourselves, How is it with my soul? Have I, or have I not a personal connection with my Lord? Is Jesus truly my Hope, my Redeemer? Oh how death instantaneously, as it were, strips us of all self-deception, and shows us the shadowy nature of all temporal things.

In writing to you at this time I would try to let you know some of the thoughts that have been

occupying my soul for many days past. The subject is one that forces itself upon the mind in such a city as I am now in; for in the streets, on the stairs, in the dwellings, on many, many occasions it is brought so prominently before the mind, it cannot be avoided. The subject to which I allude is *worship*. *Worship* in Rome has a very, very prominent place, more so than in any other city I have ever seen. Church bells, convent bells, and bells in religious processions, may be heard hundreds of times in a day. Religious pictures are almost innumerable. The churches are above 300 in number, and most of them are open daily. Little wonder then, dear, dear friends, that the subject of worship is one that has filled my mind, and occupied my thoughts. I pray that it may be for good to my own soul as well as to the souls of my congregation. But looking on all that is called worship in this place, the words of our Saviour ever come into my mind: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." These words have now for me an importance and a weight I was not before conscious of. This is a matter of deep importance to us all. And let these two things be ever guarded with the utmost jealousy: The purity of form, the purity of spirit in our worship. The

two are closely linked together, and you cannot injure the one without injuring the other. Worship here, so far as I have seen it, is altogether a mechanical thing. The almost innumerable formalities, putting on and taking off garments; bowing, kissing, kneeling, burning incense, turning to one side and then to another; the frequent repetition of the same words, and so on, has evidently had the most injurious effect on the minds of the people. And I have often longed to speak to the priests the words of Jesus: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

You can easily understand how it is, that standing gazing on the popish ceremonies which are called worship, my thoughts often wander away to Scotland, and in imagination I am looking upon the congregation in St. Luke's, and drawing comparisons between how you worship, and what is called worship here. But not to speak more of the ceremonies here, as your minister, in the name of my Master, I would ask you to consider prayerfully the words of the Redeemer: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth." Meditate on each part of public worship—singing. Do I not write the truth when I say, in this we often sin grievously; thinking of the

music, or the singing, or something about the service of song, but our spirit not in the spirit of the song of praise. My dear Congregation, let this be a matter of prayer and thoughtfulness with you all. Here I sometimes feel shocked at the people, the attitude of devotion, and nothing of the spirit of devotion about them. The other day, in one of their least objectionable services, I saw three priests kneeling down as if to pray, but they appeared content with the attitude, and began a conversation with each other, handing their snuff-boxes from one to another, and so on, as usual. My thoughts quickly took me back to St. Luke's. I wondered if strangers looking upon us when we gather together to worship God, would see anything like that. But what, let me ask, does One who is not a stranger sometimes see, may often see, when he looks down upon us when we profess to be engaged in the service of song? Remember the presence of the Spirit of Christ when you sing the psalms. Let us seek for the spiritual; let us not be content though the music should be faultless, the time and the harmony correct; what of that, if the heart be not in it. What is it, without the Spirit, but as the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal; nay, it is a thousand fold worse; it is an insulting mocking of our God,

whom we come to worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Here I wonder how the people can be so blind, how they can imagine they are worshipping God acceptably, when words and actions are so divorced from the spirit of worship. But, beloved Congregation, apply this test to your service in the house of God. From this time forth, let it be the endeavour of us both, to enter into the true spirit of worship. Oh! that this were done in Scotland throughout our churches. Those silly controversies about instrumental music, and kneeling or standing at prayer, would cease to be heard. Prayer (in this we are as one), should be in the spirit; but oh! how often the mind does wander, and vain imaginations come and dwell within us, and we hold converse with them, and, like the three priests on their knees, we appear to be content with the attitude of prayer, forgetting, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Bending the knee, or clasping the hands, or even pouring forth words, however beautiful, however sublime, is not prayer, unless the heart go up to God. This the youngest, the most ignorant, knows thoroughly; and yet it is what the oldest and the wisest not seldom forget. When we sing in the spirit, when

we pray in the spirit, oh, how altogether different from the form without the spirit! The form may be faultless, but what is it but a dead, lifeless thing. Suppose a sculptor were to chisel out of the purest marble the image of a child, what mother, what father would be satisfied with that instead of their living offspring? and what is it but insulting to our God to give Him songs of praise and no thoughts of praise in our hearts; or sing the breathings of sorrow because of sin, and we indulging in iniquity without remorse or restraint, or taking the attitude of prayer, and our souls far removed from the spirit of prayer? Oh, my beloved flock, let me implore you to make these things matters for personal, private meditation; seeking to look on yourselves and your worship as the Lord looks upon both, and that is to know what both truly are.

My prayer often is that I may be soon in your midst, and have the joy of seeing you all advancing daily in every Christian grace, mutually strengthening each other in the spiritual warfare.

I remain,

Your Servant in the Lord Jesus Christ,


JAMES AITKEN.

TO THE SAME.

ROME, 2d February, 1864.


MY DEARLY-BELOVED CONGREGATION, — Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I trust that my soul may soon be comforted by your presence, as now I believe not a few among you are aiding in the holding up of my hands by your prayers. Of my work here I hope soon very fully to tell you by word of mouth. But yet I would tell you what I have done in some slight degree, that you may be stirred up to be more frequent in your prayers for me. My work here is not with Italians, but with our own countrymen and women, many of whom come to Rome every winter for their health, on account of the mildness of the climate, and thus, at the very time that the soul should more than ever have the ministrations of the Lord's servants, they are in the place where they are more difficult to be had. I have been enabled, under the good providence of God, now for *six Sabbath-days*, "to the strangers in Rome," to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ;

and last Sabbath had the sweet privilege of "breaking bread" and drinking wine at the communion table in commemoration of our Divine Redeemer. At the communion table in Rome thoughts of my beloved people were in my soul, and how, at the last communion we had together, it was much in my mind to dispense the communion about the beginning of the year to you, instead of which the Lord has brought me to a few strangers in Rome. Let me ask you, dear flock, do you grudge the strangers in Rome, for a few weeks, my feeble ministrations? Is it the case that there are those among you who, because their minister has been asked to do for a little while a delicate, difficult, and important work for the Church of Scotland in this foreign and superstitious city, withdraw from the preaching of the Word, or wander from their wonted place of worship, and thus weaken and discourage very much indeed the Church at home? Surely, beloved Congregation, it is not so in any great degree. I ask you to remember me in your prayers, and to meet for that purpose. I know there has been much sickness and death among my flock, and my soul has grieved over your afflictions; and there has been death not only among you, but he has had work to do among my brethren in the ministry.



Almost the last person I spoke to before leaving Glasgow was the minister of the neighbouring parish, and kindly and affectionately he bade me good-bye, offering to help me and you, my Congregation, in any way in his power, and now I have heard that the Master has called him home. And he who took up my work when I came to minister to you has also been called away from the work of the vineyard.

Truly, dear Congregation, my ear, and mine especially, must be very dull if I do not hear my Father say, "Prepare," "Prepare!" It is the eleventh hour — "a little while," "a little while"—and the call will be to hasten home; and I have had strong yearnings of soul to go and preach to you as I have never done; entreat you who are in Christ to live in Christ, as I have never done before in all the course of my ministry; and to you who are not in Christ—you who have or may not have head knowledge, but who have not Christ, have not realised that you *are* lost—are in a state of condemnation, and are daily marching on to the eternal doom. Oh, all ye who have not received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, who have not received the blood-cleansing, oh, what word or words shall I pen to express how I have, within the last few days, yearned



over you, and longed to speak to you, and felt within me an impulse to hurry off from the strangers in Rome to plead with you about your soul's salvation! Let me do it now. It may be God shall lay my feeble frame in Italian soil. It may be Christ shall come, as He has promised to come, like a thief in the night, and thus the yearning of my soul not be satisfied. So now let me plead with you to turn and live. Let the thousand and one *ifs*, and *ands*, and *buts*, and all the regiment of difficulties that the devil and unwilling souls are so clever in raising up, not cheat you out of *eternal life*. The poor, half-witted man realised the truth, saying—

“I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.”

As you are *doubting, fearing, dreading, conscious*, or not conscious, of your guilt, and therefore all the more conscious of your need, work the work of God, *by believing on Him whom He hath sent*.

Oh, dearly-beloved, but Christless souls, realise that dread, terrific thought, *a Christless soul*; that is, I am asking you to realise what the state is in which you yourself are. What is it? Without Christ! On the brink of *hell*—everlasting condemnation. Without Christ; that is, rejecting the offer

of reconciliation, refusing to lay down the rebel heart within you, clutching the devil's black banner of revolt, preferring the vile, the loathsome, the corrupt, the abominable, to what is true, and honest, and holy, and loving. Oh, I beseech you, every Christless one, whoever, whatever he be, to tarry not for a single instant, but at the very moment you hear the words read, lift up your soul in simple faith to Jesus as your own personal Saviour, and never, never has Christ refused even the guiltiest; His own word is, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" do not dare to doubt His word. Do not do that deadly thing—begin to work for Christ to save your soul. Oh, I am afraid of some of you. It is not your work for Christ that saves you. It is not my work for Christ that saves me. But it is Christ's work for us. What connection, then, is there between that work and you? If none, you are lost. *The gift* of God is eternal life; accept the gift, or you reject it, and you reject heaven, holiness, Christ, God.

My prayer is, that I may soon see you face to face, and may your holy, humble, devoted walk be the evidence to me, and all around you, that God has blessed the words penned by your minister far away in Rome for your eternal welfare, and that now

you are rejoicing in Christ, strengthening and gladdening your *minister's heart*, walking in the same path to the same eternal home. Oh, may the Lord Jehovah bless what is written and read to you! Think, it may be *now* or *never*; and, beloved brothers and sisters in Jesus, though you have looked to the Bleeding Lamb, and though you have rejoiced in God your Saviour, the soul of your minister is not without anxiety over you. You are the lights of the world. Oh, bear with me while I ask, How is your lamp burning? What wanderers are you seeking to guide back by your *living* Christ? Alas, alas, there are many, many in these days with Christ and religion ever on the tip of their tongue, but nowhere else, so that many instantly look upon the person that speaks about Christ with the utmost suspicion. Live this suspicion down. There are vile slanders spoken and written everywhere against all *vital godliness*. Live it down. Preach by your life, preach by your honesty, preach by fair, just dealing between man and man, preach by love and forbearance, preach by bearing one another's burdens, preach by abounding liberality to the cause of Christ, preach, preach everywhere—in the workshop, the factory, the family, in the meeting of friends, by a holy, humble life, that you are Christ's, that Christ

is yours. Believe me, beloved brethren, this is the great want of our age. Many are calling out in our day for eloquent ministers, many for earnest ministers, many for learned ministers; but in all this there is far too much of Popery, a looking to ministers as if they were the Church, as if they, and they alone, were to have the interest of Christ's cause at heart. Let us, beloved, blush for shame if such thoughts be in our hearts. What! has Christ purchased us with His life's-blood, has He waded through what may be called hill-agonies for us, and, when He asks each one to do His work, we turn to the minister as the one who is to do the work for us all. No, no, Christian brethren, ye were not saved by proxy, nor are you to live for Christ by proxy.

But I think I hear some dear brother or sister say, I am not an office-bearer, I am neither elder, manager, nor Sabbath school teacher. What of that; you are a Christian, and as one of Christ's flock I speak to you. What now are you doing by your *secret prayers*, alone with God, by your regular attendance in the house of God, and by all the means in your power, to strengthen and carry on the Lord's work? What though your minister be not with you. Are you looking to the Master? Do you go

up to the house of prayer looking for the Master—*longing* for the Master's presence and smile? Remember it is sin to put your minister between your soul and Jesus. Jesus loves you so much, *He is jealous of your love*. Yes, I do want your love, and affection, and prayers, but only as a brother in the Lord; not to draw away for an instant your thoughts or love from Jesus. Oh, if that were the case, then should I be a Popish priest with a Protestant name—an idol to be removed or shivered.

I am sure that many prayers have been going up to the throne of grace from Christian brethren for me and my work here, for oft I felt as if the Lord were answering prayers.


I have already told you I have preached six Sabbaths in Rome; this has been in connection with the Church of Scotland. One Sabbath I preached for a brother minister; many here told me how much their souls had been refreshed. One dear Christian brother said he came to Rome with fear, for he was afraid he was coming to a *barren wilderness*, and lo, the Lord had been leading him to green pastures, that his soul might be fed and strengthened, and that he might go on his way rejoicing. One day I was speaking much about you all to him, and how I was longing to return to you; he stopped me, for

he thought I was murmuring about being in Rome. I was verging on it, and forgetting the Lord ordereth my path, yea, my very footsteps; and after the goodness of my Lord last Lord's-day, I dare not doubt that God has purposes of mercy in bringing me to this superstitious place, filled with grievous abomination in every corner. And now, let me, dear Congregation, tell you of the Communion Sabbath. Our place of worship is a large room that holds about sixty, and it was filled. From the first moment the soul was awed; there was a consciousness that it was a special day, and earnestness was stamped on every face. Your minister commenced by giving out his favourite twenty-third psalm, to be sung, and though not strong in body, the Lord did help him in the glorious work of the day, in prayer, reading, and preaching. It was a blessed and glorious privilege to meet in that upper room in Rome, to preach the gospel and break bread in the same city in which the apostle Paul covered and sealed his work with his blood.

The American Episcopal minister most kindly gave for our use his church plate. The Free Church minister helped me in making arrangements. The American ministers—one a missionary from India, the other an Independent minister; a minister of

the Church of England, and ministers of different Christian denominations, joined us in the simple and sublime service, according to the form of the Church of Scotland. And looking on the communicants before me from different parts of the world, and different denominations, truly then I realized what the *right kind of union* was, what forms the *one true church*.—*Life* in, and *love* to Jesus, walking in His footsteps, keeping his commands, loving one another.

And now, in conclusion, beloved Congregation, I would say a few words about my health, knowing that you are ever making kind, anxious inquiries about me. In coming to this place I suffered much on the waters of the Mediterranean, and was much weakened by it for many days. The winter in Rome has been unusually severe; and thus our heavenly Father has seen it good for me that the work I had to do should be done by me in a state of health that made me look to Him, and lean on Him for everything; and truly I may say, when I am weak, then am I strong. Now, as my work here is drawing to a close, and with the return of balmy, genial Spring, my strength is increasing, and my physician is urging me to rest for a few weeks, that I may return to you in greater physical strength than I



have enjoyed for some months. But this I cannot do, for I have heard that my people are grudging me every day I am away; and, therefore, as soon as my mission is brought to a close, I will instantly set out for Scotland, loved more intensely than ever after my sojourn in this place of spiritual darkness. Let me ask you now, dear Congregation, most earnestly not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together, and unite each and all of you, elders, managers, Sabbath school teachers, members, and seat-holders, to carry on the work heartily and harmoniously, looking to the Lord for His blessing, and thus will you cheer and invigorate your minister's soul in this dark place.

"May the Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."

Your Servant in Jesus,

JAMES AITKEN.

TO INTENDING COMMUNICANTS.

ROME, *March 25th*, 1864.

TO INTENDING COMMUNICANTS,—I shall not be able to speak to you face to face till (D.V.) after you have been at the Lord's table. This is to me a matter of deep regret, and I have no doubt it is so to you also. But let us remember that the blessing is from God, and the very circumstance that your minister is not with you personally to aid you in the work of preparation should cause us to be more than ever in prayer to our heavenly Father.

Remember, dear intending communicants, that it is not the part of the minister to say whether you are, or are not fit to come to the Lord's table; this is to be between God and your own souls. It is the minister's part to lay the matter so before you that you may judge, not that we may judge.

With regard to the nature of the holy ordinance of the Supper, the blessed truths that it makes known, and the obligation on every child of God to observe it, you have no doubt been fully instructed, and

these things have again been brought before you by my fellow-labourer. But there is a question I have oft known intending communicants ask themselves, when desirous of coming to the Lord's table—" *Am I worthy?*" I believe this is an ensnaring question that often does harm, and is in every way calculated to do harm. Let it be answered by *Yes*, and then the one that so answers is apt to be puffed with spiritual pride, and his soul is very much injured, and self, and not the Saviour, has the chief place in his thoughts; or, should the answer be "*No*, I am not worthy," then there is great danger of despair, or an effort to make ourselves better, and the soul begins to *do something*, forgetting that all worthiness is from Christ and not self. It is because of what Christ has done, and not what we have done. And should the soul of any of you have this question—Am I worthy? standing before you, let the answer of your heart be, In myself I am unworthy of any blessing, far less that of approaching the Lord's table. But I look to Christ, and Christ alone, to make me worthy. All worthiness is in, and from Him. Having this truth clearly before the mind, there will be no danger in your prayerfully meditating upon the following questions:—

1st. Have you at this time been praying that the

Lord Himself might make you a worthy communicant?

2d. Are you sensible that you are a sinner, deserving the wrath and curse of God?

3d. On what ground do you hope to be saved?

4th. Have you felt it to be a wonderful thing that Christ should have loved you, and given Himself for you?

5th. Have you always felt as you now do in reference to these matters?

6th. Do you love Christ?

7th. Do you wish to be made holy?

8th. Will Christ make you holy without you using the means?

9th. Are you determined to use all Scriptural means to be made holy?

Dear intending communicants, my heart's prayer is that the Holy Ghost Himself may teach you and guide you into all truth, and that you may, at the Lord's table, be made conscious of the Lord's presence to bless and strengthen you for your life-journey.

J. A.

TWO DEATH-BED SCENES.

I HAD just returned home after visiting for a short time on one of these very warm days in the end of June, and though I had done but little, was fatigued, when a message was delivered to me that a woman who was very ill wished to see me. In a short time I was at her bed-side. She was lying in one of our hospitals. After a little conversation I found she had attended my prayer-meetings, and from what she had heard there was now anxious to see me.

"My mind," she said (looking in my face with a melancholy smile), "my mind is naturally dark; I should like it were made clearer." She wished to have no clouds. I then spoke to her of Jesus, as a free, full, and fitting Saviour. I spoke of our raising mountains of transgressions between God and our souls, yet Christ could come over these mountains (alluding to the Song of Solomon, chap. ii.) I then read and spoke on the last verses of the 43d chapter of Isaiah, and the first few verses of the 44th chapter of Isaiah, noticing the striking contrast between 24th and 25th verses of the 43d chapter—"But

thou hast made me to serve with thy sins; thou hast *wearied* me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

I do not remember ever before to have seen what might be literally called drinking in the words of Scripture, as I read and spoke these words to that poor, consumptive patient. Much of what she said I have forgotten, and am sorry that at the time I did not write some part of it down; but the countenance of that one, and the tenor of her few words, I cannot forget. Perhaps, dear reader, you have gazed on some fair landscape, but which for a moment lost its brightness when a heavy, black cloud passed between it and the sun, but while you gaze the cloud passes away, and the mountain looks as if it were really rejoicing. So was it with M——. The soul-refreshing name of Jesus, and the tidings of His love, dispelled the cloud; her eye spoke of faith, hope, and love, as plainly as her words showed that she clung to Jesus, and Him alone. I repeated the following words:—

“Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come.

“Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come.”

Her eye brightened, and she said, “Oh, sweet, sweet!”

Afraid that I was tasking her strength too much, I left; before doing so I engaged in prayer, asking her first what I should pray for. She spoke of the darkness of the mind, and then said, “Oh, that I may rest on Jesus alone—on Jesus alone.”

I saw her about noon the day after. She was insensible when I entered the ward. Looking on her face, I saw that death was making rapid approaches. I sat down beside her, quoted a few of the passages that appeared the previous day to give her joy. The effect was marvellous. She awoke as a person from a sleep. She spoke, though very weak, joyfully and peacefully concerning the Saviour. I again repeated a few verses of the hymn about coming to Christ. She gazed upwards, lifting her hands, as if she saw, far beyond, homes of peace, and longed to be there. I again asked what I should pray for with her, and again the reply was, Jesus.

I made the visit short, afraid of fatiguing her.

When leaving, the nurse said, "Oh, Mr Aitken, there is a woman up stairs; I think she is dying, and I don't know what to do with her. She is a wild, wicked creature; she is cursing and swearing." I went up stairs, and saw a woman about thirty years of age tossing with pain on the bed. She murmured, "The bed was hard" (it was a very soft, hair mattress). She murmured about the pillows not being placed rightly, and attempted to strike the nurse, weak though she was. I spoke to her of sin and Jesus, but nothing could I discover from the expression of her countenance. Her words were a mere assent to all I said. I spoke of her pain and suffering, and then of the agony of Jesus; prayed, and left her with a heavy heart. Before I had left the building it was told me Mary was worse. I saw her again, and though I had only a few minutes before seen her, a complete change had come over her face. The eye was sunk, the lips white, a constant quivering about the lips, and she was muttering a few words incoherently. Again a few words from the book of life were spoken. She smiled, using her favourite phrase, "Sweet, sweet." We prayed, and when I left her she shook hands. I felt as if I were standing close by the Jordan of death, and she already some steps across.

Who was she? what did she do? were thoughts in my mind. She came to my prayer-meetings, yet I was utterly unacquainted with her. The nurse knew nothing of her, only that since she had been brought into the hospital she felt as if she could sit night and day by her, she was such a gentle, good, and patient sufferer. Afterwards I learnt from a neighbour of hers that she had no relations whatever in this country, all were away in other lands; that she had supported herself entirely by needle-work, and that often she had only a little dry bread and water to live on, yet was much respected by all her neighbours.

Next day I called they were *dead*. Strange feelings came over me. Had I cheered the one? oh, why did not I alarm the other more? why did I wait so little with her? Oh, now to live these few moments again that I might hold her hand, and* entreat her to look to Jesus, beseech her to remember the greatness of His work, the value of her own soul.

Now, reader, put your finger on your pulse, count the beats, every beat tells you that you are marching to the grave—to eternity. But what kind of eternity? An eternity of happiness in the presence of Jesus, or an eternity of misery in hell?—ever

remembering you have forged the chains that bind you there; you have given life to the worm that shall ever gnaw you there; that you have kindled the fire that shall ever torment you there.

Oh, reader, cling to Jesus, cling to Jesus alone. He is a rock on which you may build without fear of storm. He is a physician that can cure the wounded spirit. He is a leader that will bring the blind by a way they know not.

Perhaps, reader, you are one of those that have looked with the eye of faith, and found peace and pardon. Ask yourself this question, Am I doing what I can for Jesus? Do I gladly embrace every opportunity of speaking a word for the furtherance of His cause? I know something of the love and assurance that enabled Paul to exclaim, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh, then, go forth, brother, sister, of the Lord, into the vineyard, and labour while it is called to-day. Tell *your neighbours* of a Saviour who is *able, willing, ready* to save to the uttermost. Tell them that though their sins be as high as the mountains that tower to the heavens,

that the mercy of God is higher than the heavens. Then let their name be whispered in your prayers when you are alone with your God. Wrestle with God in prayer that His glory may be displayed in the weakness of the instrument He uses to bring another penitent to the foot of Calvary, to pluck another brand from the burning, to place another jewel in the crown.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

"O WRETCHED MAN THAT I AM."

ROMANS vii. 24, 25—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

HOWEVER men may differ from one another in outward circumstances and conduct, the affections—the experience of the inner man of the heart—show a striking, an unmistakable resemblance, so that where *heart-language* is spoken or written it finds a response, more or less distinct, in the soul of every man.

Heart-language is universal with regard both to place and time.

Men in the present day understand and sympathise with the heart-yearnings of men in all times.

What, it may be asked, are some of the things which tell us of man's brotherhood? We answer, All that is essentially human.

Man here is never satisfied. Fortune, fame,

friends, however eagerly pursued, at whatever sacrifice they may be purchased, cannot for any length of time satisfy our souls. A prince weeping because he has no more worlds to conquer, and a Paul mourning that he is not yet perfect, though they differ in much, agree in this, that man on earth is not satisfied. That such should be the case has ever been a dark mystery to those who reject or know not the page of revelation. But here, so far as man's mind can follow, it is explained.

Our nature is polluted with sin. The fair temple of the soul is in ruins; but its very ruins tell something of its former grace and beauty.

The words of our text tell of a soul that feels keenly its degradation, but knows the source of deliverance.

Let us consider, first, the apostle's grief—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" secondly, the apostle's gratitude—"I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

1st. The grief of the apostle. It was not for anything he had relinquished when he obeyed the voice of that One who, in the midst of the brightness, called to him, Saul, Saul. "All these things I count but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Nor was his grief caused by the many hardships he endured when, in spite of every difficulty, he preached the gospel to Jew and Gentile. "I am exceeding *joyful* in our tribulation," he writes in one place; in another, "We glory in tribulation."


Some, when they lose their riches, lose their reason. Pain makes others peevish, and they pine away. Not so with the apostle. His heart was fixed on riches that endure, even the fine gold tried in the fire, and the pearl of great price.

There was something he knew of infinitely greater moment than the health of the body, even the health of the never-dying soul. And yet how great the distress of the apostle when he exclaims, "O wretched man! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" There is more here than the pang caused by the loss of health or wealth. It is a different kind of grief, and more bitter, than that which forced from the king of Israel the wailing cry: "O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom, would God I had died for thee!"

It is thought by some that the apostle, in the text, alludes to a custom practised by tyrants in ancient times, namely, that of fastening a dead body to a living man. What an awful position to be in! Day and night to live and breathe beside a dead, putri-

ying body ; every breath you draw causing you to shudder—the loathsome mass bound to you when you lie down and when you rise up. Who can fully describe such a position? But the apostle was worse than this; hence the bitterness of the cry, “O wretched man that I am!” The supposed case is that of a dead body bound to a living one; but that of the text is a dead body *within* the living, retarding it in every good thought, and corrupting the very springs of action.

Man was created a sovereign to rule in the world, and a priest to offer up the incense of praise from pure lips. What is he now? Where the kingly dignity? Where the holiness of the priest? The sovereign has become the drivelling slave of every mean passion—now toiling and sweating to scrape together a little of the earth’s dust—now in hot haste chasing some bubble which, when clutched, is gone. The holy priest, born to offer up to the Eternal praise and adoration as a sweet incense from a heart filled to overflowing with pure heavenly emotions, has become a demon of selfish, sensual lusts and desires. Oh, who can mourn enough over such a bondage—such a degradation? Who is it that thus mourns? Not one of the vilest of the sons of Adam, not one in whom base,



demon passions have gained such an ascendancy that pure and gentle thoughts have been completely choked, but one who had been caught up to the third heaven, and had seen and heard what the tongue of man could not describe; one who was an honoured ambassador of the Prince of Peace; one who had wrought miracles in the name of his Master; one who in triumph could exclaim, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." And yet here he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Let us try to explain how one pre-eminent in all that was good should thus bewail his degradation.

Suppose a man born blind and deaf placed in the midst of a battle-field, he could know but little of the awful carnage; but let his ears be opened to hear the roar of the cannon, the whistling of the bullets, the groans of the wounded, the yell of those who meet in deadly conflict, and how much more would he know then of a battle-field! But if his eyes were opened, and he saw the shells bursting,

the cannon-balls ploughing through masses of men, lines of soldiers rushing on each others bayonets, blood dyeing the earth, and the wounded writhing in agony, still more would he know and be able to realise the dreadful scene of a battle-field. Just so with regard to ourselves. So long as we keep our eyes shut to God's law, and our ears stopped to the voice of conscience, we know little of the strife. But are our eyes opened, then we see a deadly warfare between the flesh and the spirit; are our ears unstopped, then we hear the voice of conscience, loud, clear, and condemning, whether we be in the busy haunt of commerce, in the gay whirl of pleasure, or in the quiet country home.

Heart-language is universal. Like the apostle, men of the past and of the present time have again and again bewailed the depravity of their hearts. But there is one class especially who mourn bitterly over their degradation, and that mourning is one of their traces of family resemblance. I mean God's children.

How is it that the Book of Psalms, penned by a Jew nearly three thousand years ago, is still the close companion of those who believe in the Son of David? Just because the heart-wailings over sin and degradation then and now are the same. How

oft has that Psalm beginning with the words, "Have mercy on me, O God," appeared to backsliding Christians to have been placed in the Bible for them! How is it that Christians feel this so much more than others?—I say *more* than others, for all feel in some degree that they are in a state of depravity and degradation. Because they *contend* with the depravity.

2dly. Let us consider the apostle's gratitude. Notice, friends, how sudden the transition from the wail of sorrow to the words of gladness. So is it in the Christian's experience. When the cloud is darkest and the pang is keenest, then is the bow of hope made to span the cloud, and the balm of consolation is brought to the wounded spirit, and from the conflict the Christian comes out, not wearied, but strengthened and refreshed.


The apostle had been bewailing the deadness within, defiling and corrupting the springs of action, and here all at once he speaks of thanks. One of the reasons he had for doing so was that, by the grace of God, *he felt* his depravity, and mourned bitterly over it. Oh, Christian brother, sister, you who are heart-sick and weary, contending with your own vileness, praise the Lord that you feel your depravity so keenly. It is a sign of spiritual life.

Look on the many around you who care for none of these things; who, without reluctance, grovel in the filthy desires of their hearts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and thank God who hath made you to differ; rejoice in your contending, and thank God, when you are mourning over your depravity, that He has so blessed you that sin is to you abominable—that it is a heavy burden. And what, hearers, does the conflict with sin tell that should make us grateful? This cheering fact, that while we are contending we are not conquered. The enemy is strong and mighty. Many, oh, how many times have we been overcome! But do we yet struggle? Then there is cause to rejoice; we have not yet been completely routed. Poor, weak soldier of the cross, all wounded and battered with the assaults of the enemy, lay not down any of your armour, halt not in your march, turn not your back to the foe. The more you feel your weakness and your wounds, the more sure sign have you of returning strength. Faint, yet pursuing, press on; God will give you the victory.

But some will say, What though there be life, if every moment of it is fast ebbing away in anguish; would it not be *better to be dead*? What though there be contending, if every moment fresh hosts of

the enemy are coming in sight, and steadily surrounding us, would it not be better to give up at once? Oh, let no such despairing thoughts dwell in your mind. The anguish of your soul in contending with sin may be the crisis of your spiritual life. Oh, anything but a cold, lifeless soul unmoved by the ugliness of sin, the beauty of holiness, the love of the Redeemer. Oh, anything but the gliding *down, down* as the devil leads. But, Christian, think of our text; it is as if the apostle had said, Where, where shall I find a deliverer? where one that shall redeem me from sin? Thanks to God for deliverance, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is our Deliverer from depravity and degradation—our Redeemer who will remove far away this body of death. Turn to 1 Cor. xv. 57, you will find the same truth—"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What is the meaning of these three names of the Son of God—Lord, Jesus, Christ? That He is the *able, anointed, Saviour*. Are you afraid of death? Come to the Saviour, for He *is* life. Are you afraid of being conquered? Look to the gory cross and the empty tomb, and let the joyful shout of victory thrill through your soul. Do you think of the *sin-stains* upon your soul? Remember the blood of



Jesus cleanseth from all sin. Are you weak? His *grace* is sufficient for you. Are you afraid that though you have looked to Jesus, and come to Jesus, the devil may yet triumph, that you may yet wander into the wilderness and perish? God's covenant is an everlasting covenant. No child of God being born again can be unborn. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation, and He hath conquered sin and Satan, death and the grave. Who can pluck us from the Father's hand? None, none. Then rejoice, Christian, for your deliverance is sure; and not only sure, but near. Time is short. The duration of a life is but a hand's breadth. Our journey is short; what though the waters tower up on either hand, and the cry of the enemy be heard as they are fast pursuing! Jehovah is with us, these waters are kept apart by Him, these foes we shall soon see no more for ever.

On, then; on, brethren, in the Christian struggle against sin! Look forward to the further shore. Soon in the land beyond you will sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. Yes, now we may be crying, "O wretched man that I am!" but with that cry let the voice of thankfulness ascend, that you know that your Redeemer liveth, and soon you shall be with Him.

In conclusion, let me speak a word to those who

are not struggling, and a word to those who are. *Not struggling, not struggling!* these words sound like clods falling on a coffin lid, telling of death and corruption. And are there any here in this miserable condition? Is there one here indulging in sin, and yet living in peace, neither struggling or striving against it, or just enough to lull the conscience into a yet sounder sleep? I beseech you, *consider, consider* who can lie down with everlasting burnings! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Who can endure the wrath of the Lamb? Oh, live not a death-like life! Oh, do not cheat yourselves of heaven! What words can I use to arouse you? You have heard of Christ, and I can speak of no other. You have heard of heaven and hell; I can speak of no other. You have heard of the way of salvation, it is wide enough for you; I can speak of no other. Look at a groaning Saviour, and know something of sin. Look at the anguish of Gethsemane, and know something of hell, where you shall be fully alive to the deadness of the body within, but there shall be no word of deliverance. Oh, be warned. Come, come now, and look to Jesus!

A word now to those who *are* struggling. Let your hearts be filled with thoughts of Jesus. It is

not a system that we teach, but a Saviour we make known. Salvation is not brought by a code of laws, but by the Lamb of God—our elder Brother. The heart should be filled, not so much with the thoughts of redemption as of the Redeemer. What, oh, struggling believer, is any system, law, or doctrine to you in comparison with the knowledge that Christ Jesus—seated at the right hand of His Father—*feels* for you in every trial? In the darkest hour of affliction and bereavement, in the guiltiest moment of your backsliding, the Good Shepherd is following you. Love Him who first loved you. Let all the mighty, mysterious strength of heart that God has given us be given to the Captain of our salvation. Cast aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. The Deliverer with deliverance is near. Even yet while it is night the cry may ascend, Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.

SERMON II.

"THE NIGHT FAR SPENT."

ROMANS xiii. 12—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

THE imagery of the apostle is very striking. It is like the blast of a war trumpet, telling some slumbering host to awake, and go forth to battle, for the foe is rushing in upon them, and their only safety is in fighting.

Let us take up each part of the verse in succession. There are the terms, night and day. What day is far spent? what night is at hand? The answer is soon arrived at if we look to the close of the former verse, where the apostle says, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." Now, our salvation will be completed on the occurrence of one or other of two events—Death, or the second coming of Jesus. The first taking place, then shall we be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; the second, then shall we be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be ever

with Him. In the night-time the sun is absent; so is it night-time to the church while the Sun of Righteousness is absent, though, according to His promise, He is with us in Spirit. But a time is coming when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and all shall behold His Majesty, for the beams of His glory shall be shed through the world. Night, then, we look upon as our night-time here below. Day, our being present with the Lord. Looking back on the history of the world we know that a great part of the night is spent; and the church ought to be watching and waiting for the Bridegroom's return—listening for the sound of His footsteps—looking through the lattice to see the streaks of morning light—and oft asking, Watchman, what of the night?—until the day break, and the shadows flee away. We may also view the words as addressed to the individual Christian. The day which is at hand being death—which is the gate of life that ushers into endless day. "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness." The apostle states this, as though it were only natural that we should do so, as soon as we were made acquainted with the fact mentioned in the first clause of the verse. What, then, are the works of darkness? We shall find some of them named by the apostle in Col. iii. 8—"Anger,

wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, out of your mouth." But these are not all. There are two classes of works of darkness, if I may so speak. There is the class of vile and heinous sins, which all condemn. But there is another class of works which are wrought only for the night, which have their aim only for this world; and if there were no eternity, no heaven, no hell, then could we find no fault with them. But knowing that all we do is to influence eternity, then we see that those works which have no reference to the day are works of darkness. They may be looked upon as praiseworthy here; but when the morning light dawns upon them, then their folly will be manifest.

We are, then, to cast off all the works of darkness—that is, we are to cast off all that would fix our hearts to the world—we are to cast off everything that is not for the glory of God. In this we are not to include the daily toil that may belong to our position in life. The weaver at his loom may be working better for eternity than the minister in the pulpit. The one may be toiling with a heart grateful to God for the work He has given him to do, and the health to do it, while, constrained by God's love, he is planning how to do good to his fellow-men; the other may have his heart full of earthly thoughts

while discoursing about heaven and eternity—"And let us put on the armour of light." The thought of contest is here brought before us, not a mere change of employment, which might have been implied had the apostle said works of light in contrast to works of darkness. Unless we cast off the works of darkness we cannot be Christians. But this is only half. We are to put on the armour of light—that is, truth, righteousness, gospel-peace, faith, hope, the Word of God, and prayer, as the apostle enumerates them in the epistle to the Ephesians.

Let us now consider to whom the words of our text were addressed. From the previous verse it is quite evident that they were spoken to Christians; nay, even to Christians who were looking forward with certainty to salvation. That it should be so appears rather striking, but that it is really the case you have just to read my text and you will see that the apostle includes himself in the number who are to awake and cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Is there not inconsistency in thus speaking? Are not Christians children of the light and of the day—those who are looking forward to dwell for ever with the Lord? To the unconverted it may seem inconsistent thus to address the soldiers of Jesus, but to the Christian it does


not so appear; for now, in his daily experience, knows the difference between the act of justification and the work of sanctification. He feels that this at the night time, and his eyes are apt to become heavy; or the darkness in which he is shrouded blinds him that he does not look forth, waiting and watching for the day. The Christian knows very well how much he needs exhortations like those of the text to keep him from slumber and from falling backward into sin. But some may say, What need of such exhortations to those who are certain of their salvation? To such we would point to the Bible, and shew them the apostle in one place writing, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," and then show them many texts and others of a similar character. But there is no text in all the Bible that sanctions our using as a plea of indolence the confidence and certainty of salvation. That we may and ought to have, and we may be quite sure that those who do not seek it are not taught by the Spirit of God.

Let us now mention a few of the reasons why

Christians are warned that "the night is far spent, and that the day is at hand."

In the parable of the talents, our Lord teaches us that there will be a judgment among His followers according to their lives in the world. While Jesus has purchased for His own all glory and honour, and while he who receives the mightiest reward—he who wears the brightest crown among the kings and priests of God, feels that he is unworthy of the lowest place in heaven, yet the judgment will proceed in rigid accordance with the lives we have led here—as we have sown, so shall we reap. How appropriate, then, that the Christian should hear the startling truth, that "the night is far spent, that the day is at hand." For what does this tell him? That the time is lessening that has been given him to lay up treasure in heaven; therefore must he instantly cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, or he may be left far behind in following Christ. He who is the likeliest to Christ in his life, shall be the nearest to Christ in heaven.

Ambition is often spoken of as a vice, and so it is; but what constitutes it a vice? Is it the striving onward and onward, though there be none to cheer or sympathise? Is it the looking steadily to one aim, and, by indomitable perseverance, overcoming



every difficulty? No; it is not in these that the vice consists; it is in the prostitution of these by unworthy motives, to ends that are vicious. Now, the gospel supplies us with right motives and aims, telling us why we should strive, and what we should strive for; and warning us that the time we have for labouring is lessening. Among the millions of the redeemed, where will you stand? Do you not desire to be very near your Lord? Think, now, that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand;" cast off at once the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.

Another reason, my brethren, why I would urge upon you to listen to the cry of my text is, the relationship in which you stand to Christ. Jesus claims you as fellow-workers; you are His subjects; He expects loyalty in your hearts. Now, what have you done for Him? what exertion have you put forth to stem the tide of iniquity? what have you done to extend the kingdom of your sovereign? Christ has shed His blood, and calls upon you to labour in the cause for which He has done so much. Think of your close connection with Him, and that every day you live, you have less and less time to live and labour for Him. Oh! what a thought to die, and see so much that you might have done, and have not done. While you have time, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light.

There is one other reason I would urge upon you for attending to my text, and that is, the relationship in which you stand to your fellow-men. In the Christian religion there is no selfishness. The happier we can make others, the more happiness we possess ourselves; the more spiritual wealth we bestow, the wealthier we become. We are not only anxious that our own crowns should be bright, but that our friends should have theirs bright also.

Now, if we are cold and indolent in the Lord's work, our conduct will tell upon all our friends, for they are apt to follow our example. Knowing, then, that we have but a little while to do them good—a little while to give them a living sermon—let us be earnest to-day. But not only may we influence those who, like ourselves, are joined to Christ, but those not in Christ. Think of their condition, how terrible; tongue cannot describe it. But if they are to be saved they shall be saved, and if they are to be lost they shall be lost, some would plead in behalf of their indolence. To those I would say, You know not the secret decree of the Lord; enough for you to know that the Lord asks you to go and plead with them and pray for them; do this, and you shall be blessed in your efforts, and you shall be clear from their blood. It is one of the mysteries of God's

providence, and yet a fact of daily experience, how we influence each other. A few praying Christians can strengthen mightily the hands of their brethren, and, at the same time, shake mightily the dry bones. And the Spirit comes in answer to prayer. Now, I urge upon Christian brethren to think of the souls of the unconverted, and pray for them; for you know not how far the night may be spent, and the day be at hand. And oh! what a dread day it will be to those who have not found Jesus. Let us wake, friends, to a sense of our responsibility, before their souls pass away into a dark and dreary eternity. What would you think of the fisherman who sat quietly on the rocks mending his nets and listening to the shrieks of the shipwrecked, without ever lending a hand to save them from a watery grave; or the physician who, while a plague was raging on every hand, spent his time in scenting out discoveries or trying curious experiments, whilst a specific for the cure of the malady was in his hand. Such are we, if we seek not the salvation of our fellow-creatures. Let us regard such conduct in the light of eternity, and does it not appear cowardly and dastardly. Remember that "the night is far spent, that the day is at hand: let us put off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light."

SERMON III.

SAVOUR OF DEATH OR OF LIFE.

2 CORINTHIANS ii. 16—"To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life."

IN thought stand near those three crosses on Calvary, and see how near to each other are blessing and cursing. There, on the centre cross, is the crucified Saviour; on the one side is the penitent thief, who at the last has turned to Jesus as his hope, and, with the eye of faith, looks upon the cross as a throne, and the thorny crown as a regal diadem. Look at him who hangs on the other side; to him Christ is nothing more than a fool or a religious impostor, at whom he impiously sneers in the midst of his own agony, and whom he rejects in his death-hour. As you gaze on that sacred, awful scene, how plainly are revealed to you *life* and *death*.

Draw a veil, draw a veil over that sad scene! we are inclined to cry out. But if, in order that we may be encouraged and warned, God hath lifted that

veil, would it be right that either you or I should put forth our hands to draw it down? Follow in thought the Lord Jesus, as His soul upwards flies to the Father; and see, whom does He usher into Paradise? Whom, but yon penitent who trusted in Him, and worshipped when the world was heaping on Him scorn. What a joyous, glorious scene we can, with the aid of God's Word, picture to ourselves of Christ and the thief entering the courts of glory! But it would be wrong in us to stop here. If in thought we follow the one to glory, where can we follow the other? Willingly would our hearts turn away from this. There is no fault found with a minister when he tries to picture heaven—when, by the light of God's Word, he so describes the home of the redeemed that you can, in fancy, hear the sweet sounds from the angels' harps, and see the bright hosts standing on the sea of glass, the jasper walls and golden streets lighted up with endless day, the tree of life ever loaded with fruit, and, above all, the ever soul-comforting presence of the Lamb that was slain! But when, with warning voice, he would seek to direct your thoughts to the scene into which the impenitent thief was ushered, you turn away from him, and say it is coarse to speak much about it, or even to name it. But look again to

Calvary; above it you may see heaven opening, but looking downwards you cannot but see hell yawning; while in thought you follow the one malefactor, and see him robed in glory, singing the song of the redeemed, and follow the other and see him in everlasting burnings, joining in the eternal wailings of the damned. Now, dear friends, wherever the gospel message is made known the effect will be the same as on Calvary—to some it will be the savour of life unto life, and to others the savour of death unto death.

Let us, then, in the first place, look at the two sides of the gospel message. The word gospel we associate with all that is lovely, tender, merciful. We think of the angels on the plains of Bethlehem, and we hear their sweet message, "Fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people;" and their triumphant song, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will toward men." The gospel is glad tidings, telling of salvation—of God's love to man in Jesus; it is full of peace and joy. Now, all this is true, quite true; but it is not the whole message; and see to it that ye be not content with looking at this one side of it, and so teaching your souls to say, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. Honestly read your Bibles, and

you will find that it makes known to you salvation and damnation—heaven and hell.

The gospel message is, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." However unwilling a minister may be to give pain, he must not shrink from declaring that he who believeth not is damned; if he does so, it is at his peril, and he is not preaching the gospel aright. We are ministers, not masters; servants sent to you with a message; and who can describe the blame that rests upon us if we do not deliver the whole message. And tell me, dear friends, who hath taught you the way of salvation? It was Jesus, and from his lips we have also heard about damnation. Now, if I undertake to preach Christ I must do as he did. Ah! some will say, Does not love melt the heart and terror harden it? Tell us of the tender, loving Jesus, the sympathising friend, the thoughtful, generous host in the wilderness feeding thousands; picture the scene where He raises the widow's son; let us see Him surrounded by the maimed, the halt, the blind, the lepers, the tormented with devils, the sore-burdened with sin.

In this strain we are oft asked to preach, and so we do; but we have something more than this to

tell you about. We must not only speak to you of Jesus the Lamb, dumb before His shearers, but we must tell you of the wrath of the Lamb, and Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Ah! dear friends, beware, beware, of taking only half the gospel message—looking only to that which pleases yourself. It is childish to close your eyes and think that terror will not come because you do not see it. The gospel has a message not only for the penitent but also for the man who will persevere in sin. It drags the hand from the eye, and shews him the awful doom that awaits him if he will still reject the gospel tidings.

2dly. Now, dear friends, let us consider the double working of the gospel message. And may the Holy Spirit enable us to realise the solemn thought, that our meeting together this day must be either a blessing or a curse. And this is easily explained. Salvation is offered to you—you hear of Christ as the Saviour of sinners. The gift of God must be either accepted or rejected; there is no alternative. To delay till a more convenient season is to reject the gospel offer, and ~~of~~ proves more deadly than a flat refusal. Thus was it in the days of the apostles; their preaching was either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Think for a moment, and

the awful reality will rise up before you. God invites you to come to Him, that pardon, peace, joy—in one word, that Christ may be yours. You refuse that invitation; what can that refusal be but the heaping up of wrath upon wrath, making the gospel message an odour of death unto death? But do you accept, taking God at His word? Are you saying, God is true; His promise is plain; I trust Him; I lay myself at the foot of the cross, and look to Jesus, and to Him alone; He is altogether worthy; worthless in myself, all my dependence is on Him? Then is the gospel message to you a savour of life unto life.

Now, dear friends, suffer me to ask each one of you, How is it with your souls? What is a preached gospel to you? Is it the savour of life or of death? It must be one or other. And now I would say one word to those who may have listened to the gospel for years, to whom church-attendance is a habit—a second nature—but who may never have accepted the offer of salvation; who, up to the present time, have only been trifling with it. Let me plead with you, as you love your own souls, beware of another *moment's delay*; do not trifle with eternal interests. Your case, speaking humanly, is almost hopeless. Let me explain myself. Each time you

have listened to a gospel sermon has been like the blow of a hammer, which hardened, if it did not break. How hard, then, your hearts must now be. And will this sermon only harden? Ah, yes, it will, unless, by the blessing of God, it break the stony heart. Most earnestly do I entreat you to accept Christ as your Prophet, Priest, and King. Come unto Him. In my Master's name I cry unto you, Come unto Him and hear His own words—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

But there are some who would raise objections to the gospel because it is thus the savour of death as well as of life. Better, say they, not to preach the gospel at all. Better that we should never hear the name of Christ. To them we reply, Because some abuse God's greatest gift, would it be better that the gift had never been offered? Because fire sometimes destroys, would it be better that a fire never were kindled? Because the sun scorches the plants of the desert, would it be well that it were blotted out from the heavens? Would it be well that because vessels are sometimes wrecked, and sink beneath the billows, that therefore a sail should never be set? Would it be well that because the love and mercy of God are so oft abused, that there-

fore He should not make them known to mankind; that there should be no offer of the gift of salvation; that there should be no joy of pardoned souls; no death-bed triumphs; no consolation at the graves of loved ones; no looking forward with hope and joy to the Master's coming; no songs of redeemed ones in glory; but an eternal, universal gloom?

SERMON IV.

"OCCUPY TILL I COME."

LUKE xix. 13—"Occupy till I come."

NATURE abhors idleness. If you would but listen to the many million voices with which she is preaching, if you would but read the many million letters she is spreading before your eye, you might find in them all the lesson taught to her by her Master; it is, "Occupy, occupy." Wander far up yon hill, and see the spring rising up among grass, reeds, and rushes. It rests not, morning, noon, or night. Trace it over rocks, among boulders, along meadow-fields to the ocean; it stays not, it lingers not, but onward, onward flows, teaching the first lesson of my text to those who live on its banks, Occupy, occupy.

Wander down into that valley, and listen to another teacher giving the same lesson. Down in some sheltered nook, in early spring, you will find smooth green leaves springing from the ground; move them aside and see the little bells of the lily of the valley, and they seem to ring out the word, Occupy, occupy. For the plant has not been idle;

ere a green spike appeared, for many, many a month it was earnestly, steadily, silently, drawing in nutriment to the root, and storing up fragrance for the flowers. The falling rain-drop and the climbing ivy, the fruitful field and the heaving ocean, all teach us the same lesson as their great Ruler does in my text. They teach us also what we are to occupy. The pounds the Lord hath put into our possession, these we are to use. Were the river trying to make itself like the ocean, or the lily striving to make itself like the oak, both would be spoiled, marred, ugly. The fountain might become a stagnant pool, and the lily lose its fragrance and the gracefulness of its leaves in attempting to form a stem. Dear friends, when from the lips of Jesus, or from the world which He hath made, you listen to the exhortation, Occupy, occupy, remember that it is with what He himself hath given you are to be occupied. In whatever sphere you are placed, in whatever work you are engaged (so be that it is not sinful), it is in that you are to be diligently occupied. You may be a servant-maid. In that station there are many talents to be used, many pounds given, which may be doubled or multiplied tenfold. Long-suffering, patience, meekness, faithfulness—cultivate these carefully; and in your heart, servant-

maid though you be, there are fruits growing that shall be reaped in eternity. Not unobserved shall these fruits grow. Your heavenly Master, even from the far-off country, shall notice them and rejoice over you. And may it not be that your life or your words shall do for those with whom you dwell what the little Hebrew maid's did for the mighty Syrian captain—make known Israel's God.

The statesman has the word addressed to him; let him be a statesman like Joseph or Daniel—showing forth God's glory—a blessing to his country.

In the hearts of some there are desires to do great and mighty things for God and the people. They long for scope to exercise their gifts. They are willing to go to the ends of the earth to preach Jesus to the heathen, or dedicate time and talents to some mighty enterprise at home. Brother, sister, I say nothing against your feelings; they are natural to every child of God. But *occupy*—do not dream. *Do*; and spend not your time in mere theory; laying plans which shall never be carried out. Be occupied with the pound which the Master hath given to yourself. Look not longingly on those He may have given to others. Some sister in her own home is longing to be of use. I would say to that one, *Occupy* where you are; you may be of great

use. Your influence may be unconscious, but not the less mighty; unseen, but not the less real. It may be for the time of family trial, when disease, death, poverty, or slander come, that your close, constant walk with God has prepared you; and all your Christian calmness, prudence, trustfulness in God, and settled joy may shine forth then, and be a blessing to all around. And so, Congregation, might I go over every station and relation of life, addressing myself to each. But in one word let me say, What the Lord has given you, occupy, and that wherever He has placed you—in the quiet family circle, or the teeming factory; the dull counting-room, or the dark coal-pit.

Again, not only is there a resemblance between my text and the world around in teaching us *what* we are to occupy, and *where* we are to be occupied, but also *when* we are to be occupied. *To-day*; now the river is flowing, and the lily seeking its nourishment from the ground; to-day we are to work, watch, pray—to use our pounds; to-day we are to listen, learn, obey. *Now*, is the constant syllable ticking from the clock of time; *now*, is the watchword of the wise; *now*, is on the banner of the prudent. Cherish thy to-day and prize it well, or ever it be gulphed into the past. Husband it well,

for who can promise that it shall have a morrow. But nature, though it teaches much, leaves us in uncertainty as to how long this round of duty and occupation is to last. Here, then, the voice of the great Master comes in, telling us to occupy *till* He comes.

There is a Saturday to the week—the hard-toiling man looks anxiously for it. There is a harvest time in the year, when the husbandman reaps of what he has sown. But though the labouring man can count the hours till the Saturday come, though the time of harvest can be calculated within a few weeks, who can tell when the Saturday night shall come to a weary world? who can tell how many months shall pass ere the great spiritual harvest time shall come, when the Lord shall give the command to separate between the wheat and the tares. Even to the angels of heaven the time is unknown. Why this uncertainty? That *to-day*, even now, you may watch, work, wait. You may be certain that He shall come, then go on. There is a time fixed, though you know it not. The Lord is absent; painfully, every day, are those that mingle in the world made aware of this. Men move on as if there were no eternity, no day of reckoning, no time for reaping the whirlwind. The Lord is absent.

How oft do we feel this ourselves when our hearts are chilled and desponding; worldliness creeping in, waywardness spoiling our seasons of communion. The Lord is absent. What more plainly tells us this than the want of love in the church—the want of sympathy among the professing followers of Jesus. The gospel is plainly preached. Light is on every hand, but how little love! Our light is like that of the moon in mid-winter—it is light without heat. In many churches where the love of Jesus in dying for sinners is shown forth, and the glorious truth proclaimed that God is love, the coldest indifference to each other may be found among those who occupy the same pews, and gather round the same communion table. The Lord is coming. Are you ready? Have you learnt the A B C of religion—death in the first Adam, life in the second Adam? The Lord is coming. Are you waiting—earnestly asking, “What of the night?” The Lord is coming, and every wrong shall be righted. The widow shall no longer mourn. The day shall soon dawn. In every moment of sorrow and sadness cry, The Lord is coming, the Lord is coming.

SERMON V.

THE LORD MY BANNER.

Exodus xvii. 15—"And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi."

THE congregation of Israel were learning in the wilderness their entire dependence upon God, and that He was *able* to take care of them. He had brought them out of Egypt with an high hand, leading them through a new path, and now He was scattering food around their camp. And that the lessons taught them in this school might be remembered when they entered their promised land, the omer full of manna was kept before the testimony of the Lord, and the name Meribah given to the rock reminded them of their grumbling and God's mercy. In both these instances they could claim nothing to add to their own glory; all was from the Lord—He rained down the bread, and He caused the waters to flow from the flinty rock. But now an occurrence took place wherein they might be apt

to say, "Here I see *my own* strength and valour." Amalek fought with Israel, but was discomfited by Joshua at the head of the men of war, and Israel returned victorious to the camp. But you cannot read the narrative without seeing how carefully the people are kept from looking to themselves, and their thoughts led right up to Jehovah, the source of the victory. Moses standing on the top of the hill, with his hands outstretched in prayer, taught them how their arms were nerved, and their hearts emboldened for the conflict. When the hands of the leader droop, so do their hearts and their fortunes on the field of battle. But now Aaron and Hur stand by and strengthen him. Once more the tide turns. Israel is conqueror, and returns in triumph. And now Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-Nissi—Jehovah my banner. Thus the name of the place and the altar would bring to their recollection whence the victory came; and their hearts, instead of being puffed up with pride, would swell with thankfulness.

Now let us meditate on the text—

1st. The banner is that which collects and guides. Around the banner the people cluster, and follow whithersoever it leads. This is illustrated in the cloudy, fiery pillar. There above the Tabernacle it

rested, and round about it were gathered the congregation. When it rose and moved, they followed; it was their guide. And so in time of war, wherever the standard is unfurled, there flock together all who wish to fight for their country, and whither the standard is borne, they follow; it is their guide. Many who live apart, many who perchance have never seen each other before, now meet as companions in arms, loving each other, striving for the same cause. So the Lord is our rallying place; however far apart we may be, when we are brought near we feel as brothers, and *this* the more we look up to our common Standard, and the less we look down to our various uniforms.

2dly. The banner separates and defies, while it draws together, those that join in the common cause. It separates them from all others, and declares that they are joined together to defy those that are opposed. Here, then, let us learn that, as the Christian is not only a scholar and a pilgrim but a soldier, it is his duty to make profession of his principles. Here there is an important question that often rises up in the heart of the young believer, How am I to make profession. I would reply, more by your *works* than by your *words*, and yet it is to be *by both*. Never be ashamed honestly to acknow-

ledge your banner; but though honestly, you should not do it ostentatiously. In vain, my dear brethren, will be your efforts to act so as to please all around you; and I warn you, with all my heart, not to attempt it; but, with your eye on the banner, live in conformity to His will; work, seeking His guidance, cling to Him, and, whithersoever the banner leads, follow. But forget not that where the banner is unfurled is oft the post of trial. In former times, ere the art of war was changed, it was where the banner was unfurled that the conflict raged the fiercest; and many are the thrilling stories told of the standard amid the billows of the battle-field, like the tapering mast in some awful storm, around it the dead and the dying; and woe to him who had to carry the colours if he were faint-hearted or feeble-handed in the day of battle. What was then is now true in the spiritual warfare. The open profession of Christianity places you in the post of danger; the eyes of many are upon you; as you carry your colours the hearts of many will be lifted up or cast down. Christian soldier, how have you done this? professing to be the Lord's, have you kept by the standard? Remember that taking up the profession of Christianity is defying the power of Satan—it is declaring open war with his kingdom.

If you enlist under the banner of the cross, it is to carry on an offensive warfare as well as a defensive, and the true skill of the soldier is to have both before his mind. Some who have pledged themselves to Christ forget this, and, fixing their eye too much on the one or the other, evil consequences result to themselves and others. If we act entirely on the defensive, we are but once more falling into the mistake of those who "Bid, for cloistered cell, their neighbour and their work farewell."

But, on the other hand, if we neglect *the defensive*, if we set not a guard on our hearts, if we are busy carrying on the warfare *without*, neglecting the citadel *within*, what will be our dismay to find some day the flag of rebellion fluttering from our own towers; and not only what our own horror, but what a gloom is cast upon the souls of many of God's children! Let me speak plainly. You profess an interest in Christ, but you are inconsistent in your walk and conversation; your temper is easily overcome, and the loud and bitter word is spoken. Where, then, is your influence as a follower of the Prince of Peace? You have none. And then comes the bitter, sneering taunt that makes you writhe; they ask if this be your religion, if this be the *meek* and *lowly* temper you have been taught to cultivate?

Shall you return sneer for sneer, sarcasm for sarcasm? Child of God, *No!* You have done mischief; suffer in silence; seek God in secret; pour forth your heart in penitence. Perchance you have done more than you ever can remedy; go to the mercy-seat, let your soul rest on the finished work of Christ. Oh! I do entreat you, dear friends, to remember that the post near the banner is the post of danger; and the chief source of injury to the cause of Christ is from the sins of professing Christians.

3dly. The banner protects. While oft near it is the post of trial, on the other hand it protects. Thanks to our God that what may seem a paradox can be so easily illustrated by the banner of our own dear country. In the midst of the wildest anarchy and revolution in foreign lands, how oft has a scene been witnessed that might cause the heart of any Briton to swell with joyous thankfulness to the God on high. In the midst of the maddest turmoil may be seen fathers and brothers carrying with the utmost eagerness their household treasures, their dear ones, to yon house over which the British flag is waving, and even on the foreign soil giving protection. In the spiritual conflict, under the banner, though in one sense the post of trial, is in another the post of

safety. What safer place, dear fellow-soldier, than under the protection of the Almighty? Where else *would* you be? Every other place is under the sway of the enemy. Here is the banner unfurled; here we oppose the enemy; here we defy his utmost power; but here only can we do it. Then, dear friends, learn here that you must be under the one or the other of two banners. You have to choose between the Lord and Baal. There is no neutral ground, and no neutral party. Those not with the Lord are scattering abroad. Those not looking to the Lord have no safety. Now, what was it that was called Jehovah-Nissi—the Lord my banner? It was an altar; the meeting-place between man and God; the place of atonement where sin was expiated, where the sacrifice was accepted, and that which sanctifieth the gift.

There may be some here who think my discourse is only for the faithful soldier of the cross, and who may be saying to themselves, I have never fought, or I have deserted; I am lost! You, anxious, troubled, down-cast soul, what was it that was called Jehovah-Nissi? Was it the rod of Moses which he bore aloft in his hand, or some trophy from the land of Egypt? No; it was the altar, telling of their sin and God's mercy. That altar is the type of Christ;

and just as the banner gathers, guides, separates, defies, protects, so is it with Jesus. He it is that, being lifted up, draws all men to Him; He it is who guides the feet of the disciples; He it is who separates those who join Him from the world, for He has not come to bring peace, but a sword. And He so guards His own that it would be better for those who would injure the least of them to have a millstone tied about their neck, and be cast into the depth of the sea. This, then, is *our Banner*—Christ, and Christ alone; Jehovah-Jesus, the God-Man.

Come and view this Banner. In our day it has been wondrously displayed. Many are rejoicing under it. Why not *all* here? Just as the soldier who looked up and saw Moses on yon rock with his hands lifted up went forth with fresh zeal to the conflict, lift up your eyes to yon glorious Mount where Christ is seated; see the hands of your Leader lifted up before the Father, while He sees your conflict with the enemy, but, unlike Moses, His hands are never weary. Oh, that this day you *would* look towards the blessed Saviour, that you *would* cast yourself upon Him, and go forth, strengthened, to fight under this Banner! On the banner is the record of our victories. Is the enemy you have to

struggle with, pride?—read on your banner *Bethlehem*; or idleness?—read *Nazareth*. Does your heart tremble as Satan approaches with a flood of temptations—the glittering gold—the couch of luxury?—lift up your eyes, read *Wilderness Temptation*. Does the cunning one laugh at sin, or call it a trifle, or would he give it a fine name?—tarry not a moment, see *Gethsemane* on your banner. Or conscience, Satan, neighbours, do all point you to the sins you have committed?—look, see in characters clear and distinct, the word *Calvary*. Do you feel a gradually increasing burden of cares accumulating—duty converted into drudgery—the heart too oft filled with thoughts of earth?—see inscribed on you banner, *Olivet*.

4thly. Triumphal joy. Sweet is the thought of victory—sweet the thought of home, of possessing the honours prepared for us.

Even on the battle-field He prepares for us a table in the presence of our enemies. Even here there is a banqueting-house, where, over our heads, hangs the banner of love. But oh, if these things be *here*, what will we find *there*? Here, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what God hath prepared and is bestowing, even *here*, upon His own children.

But what will it be *yonder*? No strife—the presence of no foe. Words cannot tell. We are obliged to have recourse to symbol when we would speak of the heavenly Jerusalem, on account of the poverty of our language.

Conclusion—MY Banner.

SERMON VI.

"I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU."

JOHN xiv. 2, 3—"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

THERE are dreary moments in life, when a sense of loneliness—an almost indescribable feeling of horror—comes over you as the thought flashes through your soul, Where are the loved ones of childhood? and then that dreary, dread word rises to your lips—*Gone!* You may have a longing desire to utter one other word in their ear, or hear one other word from their lips, but it is vain, for they are *gone* for ever. With the knowledge of what death *is*, and what death hath done, you sometimes feel as if life were not worth having. With the hollow sound of the grave, as it were, ever beneath your tread, and the wailing cry of separation ever sounding in your ear, and signs of mourning on every hand, your heart's affection has clung round a beloved one. You loved, and were loved. On that one you have been leaning for all that is true and precious, for

all that the heart desires; and on that one the icy hand of Death is laid, and you are left alone in a cold, selfish, self-seeking world; and now your heart is wrung within you, and sadly you say, What is life?

If such be our feelings of sorrow in being separated from our loved ones, what must have been the feelings of the disciples in the prospect of being separated from Jesus? For three years He had been their close companion. They loved Him. And oh, how conscious they were of His pure, unselfish, intense love for them! They loved Him—He was all to them; more than ever parent was to child; more than ever teacher was to scholar; more than ever king to his subjects. What anguish, then, must have filled their souls when once and again, and ever with more distinctness, He told them that He was going; and more than that, He foretold that one of them should betray Him, and another deny Him?

Vividly does imagination paint the scene in that guest-chamber. Peter, the boldest, yet the most bowed down with horror at the prospect of the coming evil. Never had they been, as it were, nearer to the soul of Jesus; never had they been so sorrowful. Conscious of His love for them, and

their own for Him; conscious that He was about to leave them, and leave them to suffer; nay, more, that they themselves were to add to the pangs of that suffering: oh, how each soul was in an agony of suspense and dread of evil! But now the Saviour hastens to give them comfort, not by contradicting what had been said, but by leading their minds forward to the purpose for which all was intended: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In meditating on these words, let us try to unfold the elements of consolation they contain. The first is, that there was a *purpose* in the parting. It was not an aimless, useless throwing down of His life. He was going to leave them, not because He did not love them, but because He did. The very fact that we do anything from a sense of duty, takes away from ourselves, and those who love us, much of what would be painful to both. For example, the parent may be called far away from his home, but those at home know that it was the depth of his love for them that led him to make the sacrifice, and he is

upheld by the hope—that they may reap the fruit of his labour.

Again, how different are our feelings when we think of one who has lived and died, and there has been no aim in his life, nothing accomplished at his death; and another, however lowly in earthly rank, who has lived for a purpose and died to accomplish it. The former vegetated for a few years, letting talents and opportunities run waste and glide past, and then drops away scarce missed; and though there may be a few tears and a narrow circle affected, yet there is no element of consolation. Do we not often see a mother weeping, yet rejoicing, and loving to talk of her boy's work, and how much he had done before he died.

Now, so was it with the disciples; there was much to bow them down with the deepest sorrow, but this very parting was to them a proof of their Saviour's love. "I go," this was the word of anguish; but "I go to prepare a place for you;" this was the word of comfort that was to take away the sting from all they had to suffer. He was to lay down His life, to bear shame and ignominy in every form, and all this that he might prepare a place for them. And what must that place be which Christ hath gone to prepare for His own people. From the little we

know and can realize of what Jesus is, let us try and grasp in thought what that place will be. It will be all that infinite love can make it—the love of Him who drained His life's blood for us on Calvary. It will be all that infinite power can make it—He upholdeth all things by the word of His power. It will be all that infinite wisdom can make it—He is wisdom; riches and honour are with Him, durable riches and righteousness.

The second element of comfort in these words is that there is a *period* to the parting as well as a purpose in it. His own words are, "I will come again;" and they are words that have gladdened the Church in the darkest hour of persecution. "I will come again." This is the promise of Him who cannot lie. Let us look, watch, wait, and prepare for Him, cherishing the hope of His coming as the joy of our hearts. Oh, blessed hope! how it takes a ray of sunshine into the darkest moments of trial, and gives light! Oh, blessed hope! how it lifts up our souls to the watch-tower, and points to the far-off horizon, and lets us see the dawning of the day, so that we come down more contentedly to toil on yet a while in the darkness! And all the more earnestly, all the more urgently, shall we do the Master's work, knowing that the day is at hand.

Soon, very soon, the mountain-tops shall be radiant with light, the valleys shall be shining, the brooks and rivers gleaming, and the world rejoicing in the brightness of that day. Hope is the night-lamp, giving light in the darkness, refreshing the weary soul as it pants for the morning light.

“I will come again.” Here is certainty. Jehovah, the Father, hath fixed the moment when His Son shall come with power and great glory to receive us to Himself. The hour is fixed when the heavens shall open, and Deity be manifest. The knowledge of the certainty of His coming, and that the very period is fixed by Jehovah, should add much to the comfort of those who love His appearing. They may be despised and misunderstood, they may have no peace from anything around, but this they are certain of—their Master’s return; and, oh, how sweetly the words, “I will come again,” sound in their ears—“I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” It is Christ Himself who comes again and receives each one unto Himself. His love will never change. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The anthems in glory do not make Him forget His praying ones on earth. Though surrounded with the brightness of heaven, His eye is on the pilgrims below, and for them He is pre-

paring mansions in the skies. Christ says, "Where I am, there shall ye be also." Have you not sometimes felt, when beloved ones have travelled some thousands of miles to see you and revisit home scenes, that you were afraid to speak or think of the time when they must again leave you. Yet they must do so; they have but come to see those they knew long years ago, to take a look at old familiar scenes, and perchance to stand at the graves of those whose memory is still green in their minds. Duty calls for their return to their distant home. This necessity for parting again is an element of bitterness in every re-union.

But not so here. Here is a re-union that shall be for ever; the heart shall never for one instant be oppressed with the dread thought of parting. Let us look at the thought Christ here gives us—where He is, there we are to be; His home is to be ours. Oh, for the power to put this before you! You are for ever to dwell with Jesus. What does this imply? How many things beyond the power of man to describe are included in this statement!

We know how much we are influenced by those around us; what shall we be, then, when surrounded by the hosts above, in the presence of our Saviour, and our God?—our nature made perfect, our hearts

glowing with love. There shall be no wandering thoughts in our worship, no stammering words in our praise.

“ For ever with the Lord,
Amen, so let it be,
Life from the dead is in that word,
’Tis immortality.

“ My Father’s house on high,
Home of my soul how near
At times, to faith’s illumin’d eye,
Thy golden gates appear !

“ Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word,
And oft repeat before the throne,
For ever with the Lord.”

And now, in conclusion, let me urge upon you to meditate upon what has been spoken. Enter into the consolation here imparted by the words of Jesus. Remember that while Christ is preparing a place for you, you are to be every instant preparing for that place. But this leads me to ask a question. Is there a place preparing for you in heaven? Are you a child of God, or are you not? Where is your home; or are you homeless? You have no place prepared for you, if not in heaven. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, and that you must share.

SERMON VII.

IN THE GARDEN WITH CHRIST.

JOHN xviii. 26—"Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?"

It is easy to imagine how quickly, how painfully, these words awoke memories of the past in the soul of Peter. The past, the irrevocable past, condemned his conduct now. A few hours ago he was with Him in Gethsemane—admitted to the closest intimacy—and now! now! Jesus stands friendless—alone in the midst of those who were thirsting for His blood; and Peter, the bold, the courageous Peter, denies that ever he knew the man; and, as if to show that he knew nothing of Him who said "Swear not at all," he denies with cursing and swearing. Oh how these words, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" must have wrung his soul with the bitterest anguish! Yes, they were the words of a foe, and may have been uttered with a sneer, or perhaps with simple wonder at the bold lie, or great timidity of the disciple. But what of that?

The words of a foe oft tell us wholesome truth, though the soul may wince under it. Friends tell us what is good, and smooth over what is evil; and so a Christian may oft be more profited by the words of a foe than a friend. In the sacred Scripture one of the most precious things we have is the testimony of the foes of Jesus, spoken in the depth of their malice. God inspired the evangelists to record these words for the good of the church. For example, the Pharisees thought they would damage the cause of Christ, that they would turn away from Him every one of influence and respectability, and in the depth of their enmity they spoke words of truth, not falsehood. A pure, unmitigated lie is a poor, helpless thing, without strength, unable to do any harm; but when it is mingled with truth, then it is powerful. And so it is with all evil. Evil in its native ugliness we loathe; but when it is decked up, and named with a good name, then is evil powerful.

The Pharisees in their hatred spake words of truth against Jesus—"This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." This was their testimony, and a glorious truth they uttered, though they endeavoured to put a lie in it, implying that Christ was indifferent to the sinfulness of the sinner, which,

in one view, is truth, and in another blasphemy. It is true that, however great the sinfulness of a sinner, Christ is willing to save him, yet that sinfulness hath caused Him to groan with anguish. He loathes with infinite loathing all iniquity; but He has shown forth the truth of the words of His foes in His yearning over the lost. To many a despairing one have not these words of the Pharisees been abundantly blessed? What kind of sinners were meant?—the vilest of sinners. Yes, the vilest. Here is the testimony of foes. It is true that from the lowest depth of degradation He is now ready, willing, to lift you up.

And now I would take the words of a foe, recorded here for our instruction, and seek to take from them the warning, instruction, comfort, intended by the Holy Spirit:—1st. What are the privileges of the follower of Christ? 2dly. What does the world expect from Christians because of these privileges? 3dly. The astonishment of worldlings at the inconsistencies of Christians.

First, then, the Christian's privileges. If we look at what Peter had, we shall know something of them. He had enjoyed the closest intimacy with Jesus—going with Him from place to place, listening to His words; he had been in the supper chamber—his

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feet had been washed—he had been in Gethsemane, and, mark of closest fellowship and love, he had been the companion of His secret sorrows. Such were some of the things brought up in the mind of Peter by the mention of the word “garden”—that garden to which Jesus oft resorted with His disciples.

Now, I speak to believers; what is true of Peter is true of you. You have been in the garden with Christ. Oh! believer, how wondrous were these seasons of communion; how high, how holy, how elevating; not always what the world would call happy, but yet so precious! You would not part with one moment of the sacred, holy sorrow for all the riches and joys of earth. Christian, would you, for one moment, compare anything of earth to this holy, precious friendship with Christ, that brings you so near that you are permitted to mingle your tears, your groans, your agonizing prayers with His? And this is what we are to understand from being “in the garden with Him.” It is a truth that Christ sympathises with us in every sorrow—a precious truth. How sweet, how sustaining to the soul to be able to say, in every hour of sorrow or joy, Christ knows this, Christ rejoices in my joy, and sympathises in my affliction—He is the

Brother born for adversity, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

But there is a *higher truth*—a closer intimacy. We are to sympathise with Christ. Let me try to explain myself. A minister may enter into the feelings of your heart; he may sympathise with you in every trial, and that is a comfort to you. But are you not drawn closer to him when you sympathise with him in those manifold cares and anxieties which must press upon every man who conscientiously enters upon the solemn, awful position of a minister of Jesus,—the dread of error, the guiding of a congregation, the word of counsel, the glancing at the signs of the times, the leading of souls into pasture-ground? Now so is it, in this being with Christ in the garden; it is our entering into the work with Christ, our seeing things as Christ sees them, our feeling as Christ feels. This, believer, is your glorious privilege.

2dly. What does the world expect from Christians because of their privileges? True, it knows but little about these privileges; but it knows that there is companionship, and it infers that there will be a devotion to His cause. It knows what this means—"devoted to business," "devoted to study," "devoted to a friend." Into all this it can enter, and it

looks for as much from you—that you will make His cause your own; that you will stand with Him when He bears ridicule, reproach, the scourge. But, oh, Christian, how much more would they expect could they for a moment realise the holy, precious privileges of the child of God. The worldly respect those who defend a friend, even when his cause is not good. But Christ's cause is the cause of truth, of true liberty, of holiness. How devoted, then, should we be to the defence of His cause!

3dly. The astonishment of worldlings at the inconsistencies of Christians. Where have they seen you? In the church, in the Sabbath school, at the prayer-meeting, at the communion-table; and now they see you forsaking Him, and they ask, "Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?" What is the world's conclusion? That you are a hypocrite, saying one thing by profession, and another by practice. I warn you that spiritual privileges *unimproved* leave the soul weak and an easy prey to any and every adversary. Look at Peter sleeping in the garden. Thus it is very often with ourselves. How very important it is *to watch*, having not only our eyes open, but our hearts quickened. Look at Peter forsaking his Lord. Yet here is comfort—he *repented, returned, and was received*.

SERMON VIII.

THE WORLD AND THE SOUL.

MATTHEW xvi. 26—"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

HAD you never heard the words of my text before, and were they now coming to your ear for the first time, with all the freshness of something new, with what eagerness would you listen, and the terrific significance of the words would lead your souls into deep and solemn meditation! But they have become so familiar to our eye and ear, and fall so glibly from our tongues, that, in a great measure, we have ceased to connect the meaning with the sound, so that we but very seldom realise what is meant by that dread expression—a *lost soul*!

Habit blunts the feelings. The man who lives beside a cataract thinks but little of it. True, the noise of many waters is ever heard in his bed-chamber, in his work-shop, or on his farm. Every time he looks up he may see the cloud of spray, nay, sometimes near the river he may feel the ground

tremble under his feet. And yet day by day passes, and he thinks nothing of all this, till perchance some passing traveller, who has come from afar to see this wonder of waters, reminds him of it. And is there not something like this going on in Glasgow, and in every large city? Is there not a fearful cataract in our midst, not of waters falling into lake or sea, but of *souls falling, falling* into the lake of fire—into the sea of the wrath of Almighty God? Have we not sad evidences of this on every hand—the shouts of the midnight brawler, that break our slumbers—the sight of children weeping over depraved and heartless parents—and parents weeping over children who are bringing down their grey hairs in sorrow to the grave. These, and such as these, are the more outward and noticeable evidences of the fact; they are like the waters that dash among the rocks at the side of the channel. But besides these, think of the many who are altogether indifferent to eternal realities, their minds wholly absorbed in their buying, their selling, their planning. The word of God, the love of God, the union of the soul to Jesus, are matters of indifference. Is not the word of Christ true, true to-day—true in this city—“That broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.” Yet we live

more or less unconscious of the fact till the Spirit opens our eyes and ears to the reality.

We have, in the question proposed by Christ, two things brought into contrast—the world and the soul. But I would notice, in the first place, that our Lord does not imply that you shall gain the world if you lose your soul. Nay, the surest way to lose the world is to lose the soul. Who are the wretched in every rank? who are devoid of true peace? Those who are losing their souls. And who does not see, on every hand, if he would but look, how often the neglect of soul-duties brings poverty? God forbid that I should say that the poor are more guilty than their neighbours. But I ask, How many become poor through indulgence of *sin*?—with many, many it is drunkenness, with some it is sloth, with others wastefulness. God's government of the world is a moral government, and every vice, every sin, is tending to make the man poorer and yet poorer. And this not only with those whom we see day by day descending in the scale of society, having less and yet less of the material comforts of life; but it is true also of those who may be rising as rapidly as the others are falling, if their wealth has been gained by tyranny, dishonesty, or any other foul means. They may appear wealthy,

but they are miserable bankrupts as regards all true wealth. It is by what the soul possesses that a man's wealth ought to be reckoned. It is true also of those who have honestly gained their wealth, if they have simply and entirely given themselves up to the making of money. Our Lord does not in the text imply that the possession of wealth is the ruining of the soul. In the Bible we have many instances which prove the contrary. Wealth may add to the temptations and responsibility of its possessors, but does not necessarily include the loss of the soul.

Let us now directly take up the words of our text, and consider the two things brought into contrast—*the world* and *the soul*. Now, in order to arrive at the true meaning of our Saviour's words, let us follow His footsteps from Jordan's brink to the wilderness. The forty day's fast is o'er—the tempter has approached; his first well-planned attack has failed; by the truth of Scripture he is repulsed. Now, again he approaches our Lord, and in the depth of his subtilty would turn Christ's weapons against himself, and with a Scripture quotation lead the Lord into presumption, but all in vain—baffled, he is again driven back. Once more the tempter will try; hitherto he has only, as it were, been suggesting

thoughts, but now, openly, and with all His power, he will make one sudden, mighty assault. Up to the lofty summit of a mountain is the Saviour borne, and now, by some mysterious power, in an instant of time, the world, with all its kingdoms, power, and glory, is spread before our Lord. That you may enter fully into the significance of the contrast in the text between the world and the soul, stand in thought beside Jesus and Satan, and gaze down on the kingdoms of the world—thrones, diadems, glory, treasures in air, on land, and in the ocean; let your mind revel through them. All this is the world, and there is brought into contrast with this *a soul*—a single soul. What is the soul? It is the man himself; not what belongs to him; not his body, but his being. I call my body mine, not *me*. That which the Almighty breathed into the clay casket is the soul; the immortal within mortality. These, then, are the two things contrasted; and putting them into opposite scales the question is proposed, “What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” But ere we seek an answer, let us further notice wherein the world and the soul differ. The world is material; the soul is spiritual. The world is temporal. Its beauty, glory, wealth, are passing. Death is stamped on every-

thing terrestrial. The soul is eternal. The soul of that beggar's child will be living, loving, or hating, when the sun and stars have ceased to shine, and when the world with all its glory has long, long passed away.

Now, I ask for your utmost attention whilst we seek for the answer to the question of my text. Where shall we find it? Let us go to those, who, for something of what the world can give, have lost their souls. Come near into this chamber of death; there is a mellow light diffused throughout it, that the eye of the sick one be not dazzled. Everything that man can think of is there to soothe and comfort. Come near to this bed. That sick, that dying man, perchance, is the possessor of millions. Ask him, What is your profit now? Death is before him—dark, mysterious, dreadful. Among the things he has gained, he has not gained light for the dark valley. And now the body is cold and motionless. May I, dare I, follow the spirit farther? Ought I now to be silent, and question no farther? Let me follow the example of Him who told of the rich man in hell, lifting up his eyes, being tormented in the flames. Yes; let us ask the doomed spirit, What is your profit? what have you gained? Would not his answer be in wailing cries of despair?—My gain is eternal ruin; endless damnation.

And now turn to one who has lost much, nay, all, that the world esteems for the sake of the soul. Look into that most wretched of dungeons. See there the captive, knowing not the moment he may be led out for execution. Ask, What have you lost? "Lost," he says, looking at you in amazement, "Christ is here." Follow him on the morrow to the stake. He is bound. Slowly do the flame and smoke ascend. Ask now, Have you not lost much? But his lips are singing praises, and his soul leaning on the Beloved. Follow him now in thought. He is in the midst of the white-robed throng; the joys, the peace of heaven are his; he sees Him whom he loved in the world, in the dungeon, at the stake. No, you cannot now ask him, What have you lost?

Hearers, how are you solving this problem? It is a life-problem given to you and to me to solve each one for himself and herself. And we are solving it whether we think so or not. Every day's life is just our answer to the question, Whether we shall have the soul or the world? I believe that were I to put the question to each one now before me, they would answer, that they preferred their soul's salvation to the whole world. But what do your lives say? What agreement is there between your words and your works?

But now let us consider the second question, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" That is, suppose a man had the whole world in his power, to do with it as he pleased, what would he give for his soul's redemption? What, among all his possessions, would be an equivalent for his soul, if it were lost? This leads me to ask, What is the value of a soul? Can anything on earth be considered its equivalent? There are only two spots of earth where the worth of a soul was fully revealed—Gethsemane and Calvary. Oh, man, dost thou desire to know thine own value? Then view the agonies of thy Saviour in the garden and on the cross, and know that the price of man's salvation was the life, the suffering, and the death of God's well-beloved Son. If the blood of Jesus be despised, the attempt to find the equivalent for the soul is utterly hopeless.

And now, beloved hearers, there are a few solemn lessons that I should now wish to impress upon your minds. 1st. The loss of the soul is irretrievable once the day of grace has flown past. Ah, then, think of this, and make no delay in seeking Jesus. 2d. We have only one life in which to save or lose our souls, and that life proverbially short and uncertain. 3d. The value of our immortal souls.

SERMON IX.

NO TEMPLE IN HEAVEN.

REVELATION xxi. 22—"And I saw no temple therein."

HE who witnessed the glorious vision recorded in this book had doubtless oft travelled from Galilee to Jerusalem to present himself before the Lord in the temple. In that journey he and his fellow-travellers would reach a spot where, all at once, the holy city would burst upon their view each time they went up to keep the passover. The spot would be well known, the view from it much enjoyed, for just before them lay the city of their solemnities. They could see the walls, the gates, the crowded streets, and hear the distant, indistinct sound of city life. All this they could see and hear; but probably they did neither; for in the portion of the city that was nearest to them stood the temple. They could look down upon its spacious courts, filled with worshippers; its beautiful gates, with crowds passing in and out, the white marble, as it were, flashing in the sunshine.

They saw, perhaps, the flame and cloud ascend as the morning or evening sacrifice was offered, and fancied the fragrance of the incense wafted over them by the western breeze. And the chanting of the Hebrew melody coming sweetly to their ear, they would catch it up, singing forth, with joyous voice, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord; our feet shall stand within thy gates O Zion."

He who had seen and rejoiced in the sight of the earthly Jerusalem had now a different scene opened before him. Banished to the lonely Patmos, far from Christian intercourse, Christ himself spoke to him; and the beloved disciple held communion with the angels of heaven, one of whom was now commissioned to shew him the last of these glorious visions. He came and spake to John, and carried him up in spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed him the bride, the Lamb's wife—the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven, from God. How unlike the scene he had once gazed upon from the Mount of Olives. The city was clear as crystal, for it was the holy Jerusalem. It had a wall great and high, and angelic sentinels at its gates to mark its safety. These gates opened to every quarter, to tell that its inhabitants were of every kindred,

tongue, and people; its streets were of the brightest burnished gold; the foundation of the walls, even the gates, were of the most beautiful and precious stones, telling of the excellency, of the beauty, the infinitude of the value of the holy Jerusalem. But was there not a want in this sacred city? What would the earthly Jerusalem have been without its temple? A body without a soul, a world without a sun. What a striking contrast, then, between the earthly, and the heavenly Jerusalem! The one with its magnificent temple and imposing rites, the other without a temple, without a rite.

In the world we have many institutions which are intended for good, but their very presence is an indication of evil. In going through the streets of a large city, you often find buildings, some of them like palaces, not intended for the rich and gay—the merchant prince, the wealthy noble; but, it may be, for orphans, or destitute old men and women. These buildings are for a noble purpose; yet what misery and wretchedness, do they not teach us, are abounding on every hand. What a blessed city that would be where there was *no need of such institutions*. Their absence would tell us more in favour of that city than volumes of eulogy. And so is the absence of the temple the crowning glory of the Holy Jeru-

salem. That we may enter more into the meaning of the text, let us glance at the *uses* of a temple.

1st. It was a meeting-place between God and His people. How grateful ought we to be that God has appointed to man meeting-places. Oh, how delightful the thought that, when the Lord's-day comes round, you have a set place where you go up to meet with the Lord. All know, and all have felt, though perhaps few can explain, how there should be such a quickening of our sympathies when we are in the midst of a number of human beings; but let it be among a number of *friends* and beloved ones, what pleasure and strength we derive from the very meeting; but bring in the element of religion, and there is a sympathy, unknown to the worldling, felt in the Christian's heart. But ascend from those who sing and pray with us, to Him whose praise we sing, and in whose ear we pour forth our petitions, and how grateful our hearts ought to be for a place where He has promised to meet us. Are we strengthened, enlivened, comforted, by meeting with fellow-Christians? What shall we say when we meet with *God our Father*? when we know that we are in His presence, His eye upon us—and that in love and tenderness. Little wonder that the Jew travelled far to be able to present himself before the Lord, and

that Christians yet so love the house of prayer that they have risen from sickbeds to come and be in the presence of the Lord.

If the temple and the church now be a place for such purposes, how is it that the absence of a temple in the heavenly Jerusalem is a mark of its perfection, and their presence, of earth's *imperfection*? The history of our earth tells, when there was no *imperfection*, no sin in the world, there was no temple; there was no need for it. Man was so perfect that God was ever with him. A temple conveys the idea of *limiting* the worship of God to a set time and place; and not only that, but it reminds us of how many places there are where we seldom think of meeting with God. We may, we ought to meet God everywhere; but the abundance of evil and the proneness of the human heart to forget God, are indicated by every church in the land; every time the bell summons us to go up to the mount of prayer, it is telling of our sinfulness and our proneness to forget our Creator.

In heaven there is no temple, because it is not needed. There is no need of a meeting-place when God dwells among the inhabitants; no need of a temple, for we shall never be forgetful of Him; no need of getting our hearts anew enkindled with a

devout and heavenly flame when every heart is full of love. Neglect no opportunity on earth of serving the Lord in His house, and look forward with a *confident* hope to that home where there is no temple, because there you shall *see* the Lord, and *be with* Him for ever and ever.

2dly. The temple a place of reconciliation. If two friends have quarrelled, how delightful to see them reconciled and walking together! But the very fact of your saying that they are reconciled shows that they have quarrelled. So is it in the church and in the temple. You cannot listen, you cannot look upon the ceremonies, without at once learning that man has quarrelled with God; that he has sinned against Him, and is now *reconciled*. But in the New Jerusalem there is no need of the symbol, or the words that tell, Man has been reconciled to God—brought *back* to God—for he is *with* God; what need of a place where friends should come to be reconciled, when they are reconciled already.

There is a truth I would here urge upon you. It is, Where and when are we to be *reconciled* to God? It cannot be in heaven, for there is no altar, no sacrifice, no sacrament, no temple there. Be warned by the announcement of the text, There is no temple therein. Now is the accepted time, now is the day

of salvation. Now, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts.

3dly. Plainly do the rites of the temple tell of purifying. But in heaven there is no temple, for all are pure—pure when they enter, pure they remain. Here we groan on account of our backslidings; there we go on throughout eternity enjoying more and more communion with God. Meditate on the glories of that place. Did you ever realise your guilt, and consequent danger, your separation from God, your pollution before Him? you will appreciate the statement, There is no need of a temple, for all are pure.

SERMON X.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA.

JOHN iv. 7—"There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink."

JOURNEYING northwards through Samaria, wearied, hungry, and thirsty, Jesus and His disciples come to the neighbourhood of Sychar, a spot full of memories of the past. Abraham's footsteps had been here. Here Jacob spread his tent, and built an altar, calling it El-Elohe-Israel—the God, the God of Israel. Here were the hundred pieces of silver weighed out by him to the sons of Hamar. Here he dug the well, and gave the field and the well to his beloved Joseph. Close to the well did Joshua come with the children of Israel after the walls of Jericho had fallen. In the valley stood the Priests and Levites; on Ebal stood one-half of Israel, on Gerizim the other half, while, as a nation, they entered into covenant with God. But of all these memories, none are so oft or so fondly dwelt upon as that which associates this spot of earth with the woman

of Samaria. For there, in her interviews with the Lord Jesus, is plainly brought out His love, tenderness, and sympathy, and in His conversation with her, He has made known to mankind how the deep wants of the soul may be satisfied.

Let us glance at the woman's character and circumstances, so far as the Holy Spirit has made them known to us. Notice, she came to the well at an unusual hour. Morning and evening is the time when matrons and maidens go to the well. But here is a solitary woman at mid-day wending her way to Jacob's well—at mid-day, when all who can have sought shelter from the burning sun. Why, it may be asked, is she going to the well at such an unusual hour? The question is easily answered, She might go to the well morning and evening with the matrons and maidens of Sychar, but she would feel that though *with* them she was not *of* them. The merry laugh would cease at her approach, the cheerful prattling of tongues stop, and all would shun her as one leprous. She was living in disgrace, and therefore her solitary journey to the well is easily accounted for. This very coming alone, however, shows that she was not past feeling—that the heart was not completely seared. In her conversation with the Lord, you can easily detect her

desire to act the part of a virtuous woman, and in doing so *over-acting* it. When she asks the question, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria," it is easy to see that strictness with regard to national differences was the cloak in which she tried to wrap herself in order to impose on Christ. It is just as though she had said to herself as she came to the well, All the people of the town know my disgrace, I cannot mingle with them; but yon poor, weary traveller *shall* think that I am a virtuous woman; I shall have the esteem of one, though he be a stranger and a Jew. Thus do our hearts yearn for the good opinion of mankind. It is a treasure we are loath to lose, and if lost, we pant to recover it. But this feeling, unless sanctified by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, is apt to lead into dubious paths. Here, to gain the good opinion of Christ, she appears a stickler about intercourse between Jews and Samaritans, no doubt thinking that one so strict would surely pass for a virtuous woman. Ah, friends, our esteem of denominational differences may be very high, and our morals very low. But again, farther on in the conversation, she speaks of "*our* father Jacob." We see the longing desire to stand well in the eyes of Jesus—she speaks of being

connected with Jacob. Are there not many who thus seek to add to their standing in the good opinion of others, by claiming connection with the good and holy? It was to this fallen one that Jesus came. It was for her he must needs go through Samaria.

“GIVE ME TO DRINK.”

In many ways Christ knocks at the door of the heart, and He who knows the heart knows best how to approach it. How oft do His ministers, by their mistakes and blunders, repel those they are seeking to approach and draw to Christ.

Wearied and worn, He approaches the woman as a suppliant; one who stands in need of her aid, and does not hesitate to ask it. O mighty wonder! O strange transaction! The Lord of all begging from a wretched, despised, fallen woman a drink of water. O ye proud, self-righteous ones, who cannot—who dare not lower yourselves from the pinnacle of your respectability and rank to follow in your Master's footsteps, and seek to lift a fallen one or save one ready to fall, come and stand by the brink of Jacob's well and learn the value of a soul—learn the inestimable price Christ has set upon it—learn how to approach the heart of the depraved, miserable

ones, not as the stern reprovcr, not with the "I am holier than thou"—come, realising your common humanity. In case of being misunderstood, let me here say, that it is not always in the way of soothing and winning we are to approach, or that Christ approached the heart.

The poor, despised, and despairing ones, those groaning under the yoke, those always found sympathy with Jesus, and should ever find it with the Christian. But of what use would this be to the man or woman who, in their hearts, believe that they are sailing along smoothly to heaven, the breath of respectability filling their sails? To such, does not Jesus speak harsh and bitter words? and why? Because the heart of Jesus desires their salvation; and He who appeared as a suppliant to the woman of Samaria, says to the great ones, the respectable ones, the esteemed ones of Jerusalem—"Ye scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, how shall ye escape the damnation of hell?"

In thinking of how Christ approached this woman, we notice His wisdom in asking her help. The heart of woman is almost always more easily touched by the appearance of suffering and want than by ought else. From the moment of our birth till the glassy eyes are covered, her hand is ever helping,

soothing, supporting. God made her to be a ministering angel; and she is the truly noble woman, who, knowing her position, endeavours to fill it. I have known deeds done by working-women in our own town, that have entitled their names to be written in the same list as that of the noble-hearted lady who left our shores to follow our soldiers to the Crimea—and done without ostentation, when none were likely to see them but the sufferer and the Lord. And now, this woman would at once have held forth her pitcher to the parched lips of Jesus, as did Rebekah to the servant of Abraham; but to *seem* what Rebekah *was*, she over-acted her part, and questioned instead of complying with the request. Christ had now awakened an interest in this woman's heart, and he had now an attentive listener.

But I cannot pass over this—"Give me to drink"—without noticing a deeper truth that lay in these words. Christ was thirsty; but not only were his lips parched; his soul was longing, thirsting for that woman's salvation: and Christ comes to each one of you this night, and says, Give me thy soul; never did sinner pant for salvation as I pant to give it. It is offered now—"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Will you, or will you not,

comply with the request? He is asking you to come now, He says—"Give me to drink."

I SHALL THIRST AGAIN.

Christ, in his anxiety for this woman's salvation, forgets now the pitcher of water and his thirst, to tell her of her ignorance and her want. Her ignorance made her a questioner instead of a suppliant; she knew not that she needed anything from Christ. What did *she* need from this way-worn Jew. Ah! in her inmost soul she needed much; at that very moment she was trying to screen her miserable poverty. She had drunk of earth's fountains—of the muddy streams of sensual pleasures, and her soul was not satisfied; nay, she was learning day by day her poverty and her shame. Why now was she alone at the well? Why shunned by the matrons and maidens of Sychar? She knew it all, but would not acknowledge it; and asks for that which would save her the trouble of coming to the well.

Oh! learn, dear friends, the uselessness of trying to satisfy the soul with the fountains of earth. You may cheat your soul for a time, but you have got no real comfort; you will be tormented with an incessant craving for you know not what; you may seek change in excitement, but until you come back to God.

who is a Spirit, all, all is in vain. Sit down after the merriest day of mere earthly pleasure—I do not suppose it to have been sinful pleasure—calmly ask yourself, Is that all? Is my soul satisfied with that?

HER IGNORANCE OF CHRIST.

“Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with.” How oft is the gospel the last thing spoken of, or thought of, to satisfy the soul, and yet it is the *only* thing; though now, as to the Greeks of old, it may appear to many foolishness.

THE HEART TOUCHED.

The Lord had taught her her poverty and ignorance, but still she was unwilling to look within and see it all, though at the very moment her heart was suffering pangs in consequence. And now the Lord, in tenderness and kindness, lays his finger on the ulcer that she had been trying to hide from His gaze—“Go, call thy husband.” It is not easy to imagine what a gush of tumultuous feelings must have rushed through her soul at these words. One more desperate effort she makes to draw the screen over her depravity. But, in mercy, that the depravity might not fester on to eternal ruin, the Lord tells her plainly of her sin, that she may have it for

ever removed. But now we notice what, no doubt, all who (following the footsteps of Jesus) seek to bring erring lost ones to personal dealing about their own soul must often have observed; they elude the question, turn the conversation to general subjects—about religion, but not their heart religion. She approaches him with a question about Jews and Samaritans. And now the full tenderness and pity of Jesus are seen. It appears as if He were grieved at the way in which she was striving to put salvation away from her; and, with mingled command and entreaty, He says, "Believe me." Oh! they are wondrous words—Jesus entreating the poor sinner to listen to His words and believe Him. Oh! how can any think for a moment that Christ is not ready and willing to save. Every step of His life, every word that fell from His lips, and now this longing for the salvation of this poor woman, proves it. Let, then, the sin-burdened betake themselves at once to the Sin-bearer.

THE DECLARATION OF MESSIAHSHIP.

And now she makes known that she expects the coming of the Messiah, who will be a *revealer*—a prophet like unto Moses—one who will directly make known the mind of God. And now, openly

and at once—here, by the well side, the Lord declares His Messiahship. In wisdom and in tenderness He had brought this poor guilty one to the point where she was able to bear the announcement and appreciate the good news. How different in her eyes now appeared the way-worn Jew. He had looked through to her heart, and called up, in sad and fearful array, the whole of her life. She felt her need, and He declares himself the Messiah. The pitcher is left on the well's brink; Christ and his disciples may use it. Now she forgets her sin, her shame, her sorrow; her heart is too full to have any place for them. One truth, one glorious truth she knows—He hath come; He hath come for whom the world has waited so long; He hath spoken to her; He is near the city; He must not go till others have seen Him and spoken to Him; they are brought—they hear—they believe; and one of those revivals takes place with which, from time to time, the Church hath been blessed ever since.

Now, let none say they have no influence; it is not so. Here was one who, if any may say they have no influence for good, it was she; but, changed by the grace of God, she becomes powerful for Christ.

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SERMON XL

CHRIST IN HEAVEN; THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

JOHN xvii. 11—"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee."

THE importance of Christ's departure from the world is plainly shown forth to every reader of Scripture. Fully a third of the gospel of St. John is taken up with this theme. Let us confine ourselves this afternoon to the two facts stated in our text:—1st. Christ has left the world, and gone to the Father. 2d. He has those in the world who believe in His name.

Remember how much of all Christian doctrine, and of all a Christian's hopes, rests on *facts*. And thus is it, that the simplest, the wayfaring man, the school-boy, need not err in resting on the *facts* of Holy Scripture. For example, the glorious *fact* of the incarnation, the spotlessly holy life, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. What are these *facts* but the mighty foundations of all Christianity, of all it has to teach, of all its comforts and glory. Let us consider the truths taught in these

two facts, which are, briefly stated, Christ in heaven; the Church on earth.

1st. Consider Christ in heaven.

Let *this* be clearly before your minds—Jesus Christ was and is truly man. He was dead and is alive for evermore. The facts of His resurrection and ascension were ever and anon dwelt upon by the apostles as the great corner-stone of gospel verity. These glorious facts rendered their faith immovable amid all trials and allurements. And so with ourselves; the more we dwell on the *facts* of the gospel, the more the doctrines are, as it were, lit up with sunshine, and we are not left in the cloud-land of speculation. The fact of Jesus' resurrection we cannot linger over, as it is not distinctly in the text, though closely connected with it. How does that one fact send a gleam of sunshine throughout the wide universe, teaching that *death is not an eternal sleep!* But where is Jesus? In heaven with the Father. In what capacity? As the second Adam—our representative. He hath entered into the holy of holies to stand for us before the Eternal. Can there be a subject more fitted to fill a believer with joy than the fact of Christ's presence in heaven? He is our second Adam before the Father's throne; God sees us as He sees His own Son. Fill your

minds, then, with thoughts of Jesus. The more you contemplate by faith your standing—in Jesus—before the throne of the Father, the more peace, joy, assurance are yours. How much, then, is a knowledge of Jesus required in order to have “a mind at perfect peace with God!” We fill our minds with a knowledge of the perfections of Jesus, and know that the Father will trust us as though these perfections were ours.

Dear Christian brethren, learn to look at Christ in this way, and rejoice in our Representative at the Father’s right hand—our High Priest making continual intercession for us. What a joyous life-journey the Christian’s might and ought to be! And why is it not so? Because we attend too little to the facts of Scripture—not accepting in all simplicity the doctrines of Scripture. We see some allowing themselves to run into the wildest extravagances, taking up some glorious truths of Scripture, and twisting them into downright blasphemy. There is scarcely a doctrine that has not been, more or less, abused in this way, and none more than this of the Christian’s perfection in Christ. Now, our duty is, not to turn away from it because it is abused, or try to curb the full length to which Scripture would allow us to go. To do so is to stunt the

Christian's growth, to keep from him holy joy, to make him weak and stumbling all his days, looking more to his own failures than Christ's perfections. It is to act like those who will not say a word about man's responsibility for fear of leading men's minds into heresy of one kind, or of election and God's sovereign grace for fear of leading men's minds into heresy of another kind. Now, if Scripture were honestly dealt with, all this would be avoided. Some people take up one class of texts, and only one—they give them due weight; but if there be others which *appear* to militate against them, these they think they are at liberty to twist and turn as they please, not willing to *wait* for more light—in reality, treating Holy Scripture as if there were no height above their scaling, and no depth beyond their fathoming. This is an abusing of Scripture sadly common in the present day. Hence the number of sects—the splitting up of families and churches.

Now, here is a precious truth for every Christian. Complete in Jesus Christ, our Representative at the Father's right hand, God treats with you, believer, as *one with* Jesus. If the eyes of God had detected any failure in Jesus, or seen any deficiency in the atonement, then we might tremble. But

that is past. The broken seal of Pilate, the stone rolled away, the soldiers as dead men, the living Christ, the ascending Saviour, the descent of the Holy Ghost, are all so many irrefragable arguments as to the sufficiency and acceptance of the work and sacrifice of Jesus in our name and in our stead. Now all is done; Christ is at the right hand; the Father rejoices with infinite delight in His Son, and as *He is so are we*. There are no words to tell of this. We are lost in thought. God accepting us in Jesus! Believer, have you fears? Whence do they arise? Is it because the atonement has not been sufficient? Christ not accepted? the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness not sufficient to cleanse you? the love of Christ boundless, except in your case? the Father accepts all who trust in Christ, as He does Christ, excepting you? See what your fears and doubts say. I do not say that no Christian has fears or doubts, and I think they are very presumptuous who say so. But I say most distinctly that true Christians, those who, in all simplicity, place their trust, their only trust, in Jesus the Lamb of God, have no right to doubt. It is *sinful to doubt*, because Christ is all-sufficient; can we doubt the sufficiency, power, work, or love of Jesus? Oh, my dearly-beloved, come out of the chilly, frozen atmos-

phere of doubt. Lift up your eye to the throne of the Eternal, and see there our holy, glorious Representative—the Man, Christ Jesus; and let your heart overflow with gratitude and praise to Him who became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich. Ask your souls what are these riches. God the Father's eternal love beaming upon you—you, one with Christ before Jehovah in heaven.

2dly, Now let us turn to the other side of this great truth. Christ has a church on earth—"These are in the world"—the little band of followers. Alas! ever yet a little flock.

Now this fact of a church in the world, representing Christ, is the complement of the gospel truth—Christ in heaven, representing the church on earth; so that, while we study, pray over, and rejoice in the one, it is our bounden duty to study and pray over the other. It is this taking in of a full gospel truth that keeps the mind from heresy, and the church from breaking up into little bits, each sect glorying only in some portions of Scripture truth, to the overshadowing of all others; so that Christians grow up one-sided—strong in one point, weak in every other.

How are we to represent Christ on earth? To know this, we need not go beyond the chapter from

which our text is taken—It is by glorifying the Father. For this end Christ came into the world; for this end Adam was created. God's glory is to be the motive of every action. In every position, your question is to be, What would Jesus do were He in my place? Remember, Jesus was a working-man; he laboured to provide food and raiment. Would Christ have me to be in this business? The blacksmith, the carpenter, and the mason, all, as well as the missionary or the minister, can glorify God, and thus represent Christ.

SERMON XII.

NICODEMUS.

John iii. 2—"The same came to Jesus by night." vii. 51—"Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" xix. 39, 40—"And there came also Nicodemus, (which at the first came to Jesus by night,) and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury."

A VERY small chink or crevice in the wall of a cell may be sufficient to give the prisoner an extensive view. Far away he may see the hills resting on the distant horizon, and nearer, ocean, lake, or river, glen or plain. That which the small opening in the wall is to the one that dwells in the cell, a word or an act often is to the careful observer. By noticing a particular word or act, you may be able to get an extensive view of some one's heart with whom you associate. Or, if that word or act be written down, it will reveal to all who read the account the workings of a heart. The history of Nicodemus, in the New Testament, is an example of what I have stated. Only three times is his name mentioned, and that

very briefly; and yet from each of them we have much of his heart-history—so much that we feel as if we were intimate with all the struggles, doubts, and anxieties that wrung his soul. We feel as if we were as well acquainted with this Pharisee as with any of the Lord's disciples. Let us then to-day meditate for a little upon the heart-history of Nicodemus. And may the Holy Spirit, who worketh when, and how, and where He willeth, work mightily and effectually in us. 1st. Let us look at Nicodemus as the anxious, yet secret and cautious inquirer; 2dly, As the timid friend; and 3dly, As the open disciple.

1st. The anxious, yet secret and cautious inquirer. Rumour had brought the tidings to Jerusalem that a mighty prophet had arisen in Galilee. Wonderful were His works, and no less wonderful His words. Curiosity and anxiety, hope and fear, stirred the hearts of the dwellers in Jerusalem. Was He the Messiah? Was He a false prophet? Was He the forerunner of the Lord himself? Many were the questions, but who could answer? It was the passover time when the news spread throughout Jerusalem that the Galilean prophet was in the city. He had cleansed the temple single-handed, with such an air of authority and dignity that none refused to obey. He taught in the temple, He wrought many

miracles, and held conversations with the Jews. He had called God his Father. Nicodemus knew all this, and many were the emotions in his soul. What was he to believe? He was a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrim, a master of the law. His fellow-Pharisees despised this Jesus of Nazareth; the rulers took counsel against Him. But then the miracles Christ wrought—blind men seeing, deaf men hearing, dumb men proclaiming the wonders wrought by Jesus—how could he account for all this? And His teaching, how wonderful! how different from aught he had ever listened to before. How pure His life—how bold, fearless, yet wise. Was He the Messiah—where the promised glory? Was He Israel's deliverer—what power had He over Rome? Thus, no doubt, was the breast of Nicodemus racked, as it were, with diverse thoughts. What shall he do? His anxiety increases day by day. At length he determines; he will seek an interview with this Jesus; he will try and lead Him into such a train of conversation that he will know more. But how and where will he do this? If Jesus be a false prophet, He may boast of a ruler, a law-teacher, coming to be taught; so he will be very cautious. But if He be a true prophet, how much he will lose if he do not get speaking, so that his dreary doubts

may be removed. But what, then, of his companions? What will the Pharisees and the people say if they hear of Nicodemus with Jesus of Nazareth? And thus difficulties arose on every hand; but his anxiety would let him stay no longer. His fear of men determined him to go in secret—by night; and his doubts made him cautious in every word he uttered.

Nicodemus hath learned where Christ may be found *alone*. Night has come; he is restless and anxious in his soul; and now he turns his footsteps toward Jesus. No one, he hopes, will know of this visit. He comes alone; the Pharisee will not be suspected. Now he is in Christ's presence; he has, no doubt, studied well what he will say, but when he is in Christ's presence, it appears as if the struggle were increased. Looking on the Lord, his heart *felt*, and his studied speech is forgotten, and the title of respect comes naturally to his lips—"Rabbi;" and then the exact order of his words is, "We know thou art come from God." But now his caution shows itself, and, to qualify the confession, as if he had said too much, he adds the word "teacher;" and then, of Christ's work—"No man can do these miracles that thou doest, unless"—what shall he say? Is he now going to make some such confession

as Nathaniel made, who at once acknowledged Jesus to be the Son of God, the King of Israel? No; again his caution comes in, and he says, "except God be with him." But how will Jesus receive such an one; afraid to come to him openly, afraid to speak to him candidly, and in a round-about way seeking to know something of Him? The Lord received him most mercifully; looked down into the heart of this cautious Pharisee, who was *afraid* to ask a question lest he might betray his ignorance or fear, and gave unasked what was needed. Nicodemus was unhappy, restless; perhaps he knew not his guilt—his depravity, but only *felt* that all was not right. He wanted to become a subject of Messias' kingdom, but dark clouds of error were before his mind. In loving-kindness the Lord taught him, and answered (not the words of his mouth, for his lips asked no questions, but) the questionings of his soul. He told of the beginning of the spiritual life, its mystery—like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; yet it is manifested in its effects; the quivering leaf, the tossing branch, the waving corn, tell of the wind—so is it with the Spirit's work in the soul. Conversion, its necessity, was the lesson taught by Jesus; but that he, a master of Israel,

must be born again—that he was a stranger to spiritual life was a bitter truth. Then the source of salvation is pointed out by the Lord; and he is told that, “As Moses lifted up the serpent” in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” The seed is sown—the Pharisee has listened—what shall be the result? The Scriptures tell.

But now, in the second place, let us consider Nicodemus as the *timid* friend. Another passover season has come round. Many were the questions still about Jesus of Nazareth; some maintained that He was a prophet, some that He was the Christ, some that He was a deceiver. The hatred of the Pharisees had been increasing. But what of Nicodemus; did he believe or no? Outwardly, as yet, he had not acknowledged Christ; he still walked with the Pharisees, and sat in the Sanhedrim. How difficult it must have been for him to speak with his companions; not a day but his soul was in anguish; daily he heard Christ sneered at, mocked, reviled, and what did he? As yet he was silent.

But the passover season has come, and Jesus is again in Jerusalem; crowds are listening to His words, and talking of His miracles. And now the

Pharisees, as a body, are determined to take the Lord with a high hand, and put Him to death. You can easily imagine how the heart of Nicodemus is wrung. The council is met, the officers are sent to seize the Lord, and they are but waiting their return with Jesus as their prisoner. Were they all against Jesus? More than one believed that He was the Son of God—the Messiah, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, and yet they have consented that the officers should go and seize him. Oh! how the conscience of Nicodemus smote him, and his heart sunk within him, as he heard the sound of their returning footsteps. Was he to look on Christ standing before him as a prisoner? But they returned alone, and he is relieved. Now are the officers asked, “Why have ye not brought him?” How truly they replied, “Never man spake like this man.” Nicodemus knew how true these words were; they found a response in his soul; and that night when he sought the Lord secretly, and the events of that night, flash through his mind. But now there is the taunt—“Are ye also deceived.” Christ is spoken of as a deceiver, and that in the presence of his friends. What could Nicodemus do? Oh, the painful pangs in his soul! He had been acting the hypocrite, associating with worldlings when his

heart was yearning for Jesus. There are two kinds of hypocrites: those who associate with the unconverted, and are yet yearning for the believers; and those associating with the believers, and yet yearning for the unconverted. Both are, must be, miserable. Very many, no doubt, are the excuses Nicodemus had to offer for his conduct; but the next question drove them away as stubble before the fire. Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? He was both a ruler and a Pharisee, and he believed on Him, yet his conduct was such that the Pharisees, his companions, included him among themselves as one who believed not. Here, then, he is ranked as Christ's enemy; yet he is a believer. He cannot, he dare not, sit *silent*. What will the Almighty think? Can he believe on Christ, the Messias, and yet allow himself, openly in the Sanhedrim, to be ranked as one who believes not, and is bitterly opposed to Christ? He must, he will, speak, and he does; but again we see the cautious timidity of Nicodemus. The law was alluded to, and he speaks for the law, knowing how it would favour Christ. Yet he did speak candidly enough to bring on himself the taunt; but not so much as that he could say, *I have done my duty so far as I knew it*. He was the timid friend; shunned by Christ's

friends, and eyed with suspicion by his own companions. For the time no action was taken by the Sanhedrim; "Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" prevented them from proceeding further. And did not this again smite the conscience of Nicodemus. Had he acted a more honest part from the first, how much more he might have done for Him whose name he loved.

But let us now consider, in the third place, Nicodemus as the *open* disciple. Another passover season. Jesus had entered Jerusalem amid the shouts of "Hosanna." He had wept over Jerusalem, He had instituted the Lord's Supper; Gethsemane's sufferings, Gabbatha's shame, were passed. The darkness that shrouded the land, the anguish of Jesus on the cross, were likewise passed. Two Pharisees go to Pilate *to beg* the body of Jesus. He who had secretly sought the Lord in his anxiety, and who, for fear of the Jews, hid in his heart the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and in the council only pleaded a point of law in His defence, now openly stands before Pilate as His disciple—nay, more, as His attached disciple. He comes to Calvary, bearing his load of spices. How had Christ's love, in dying, drawn out his love. Where now his fear of Pharisee or people? See him

now, standing, with outstretched arms, to receive the mangled body of his Saviour, and, with all the tenderness and forethought of a woman, the wounds are covered with myrrh and aloes. Lovingly has he aided in wrapping that body in the linen under the shadow of the cross, and aided in carrying and laying it in the new-made tomb. What a change in the heart of Nicodemus does not all this reveal. How rapidly he has advanced in the spiritual life from the time he sat in the Sanhedrim. He that had begun the good work had carried it on. The time had come when he was to decide for or against Christ; and now the step was taken. Long had he striven with one hand to hold to the world, and with the other to hold on to Jesus; but he found them gradually moving further and further from each other; however widely he might stretch his arms he found it would be impossible even *to touch* the one and the other. The Spirit who breathed on him at the first now aided him—Christ's death was blessed to him. He could not forget that the prophecy He had uttered on their first, and, for aught we know, only interview, was now fulfilled. Christ had been lifted up on the cross, as the brazen serpent was lifted on the pole, that life, eternal life, might flow forth to all who look to Him.

And now, beloved brethren, having attempted to delineate the three events in the life of Nicodemus, as showing the different stages in his spiritual history, let me seek to advance our own spiritual improvement. Were I not addressing a congregation of professing Christians, it would be my duty to show the strong internal evidence for the truth of the gospel, from the incidental allusions to Nicodemus in the gospel of John. How overwhelming the evidence must have been that Christ was God, when we consider the slow stages by which this Pharisee arrived at the stage of open discipleship. How every worldly advantage was sacrificed, and shame and contempt, instead of respect and reverence, calmly chosen rather than deny Christ.

Some of you are not anxious. I pity you—I warn you; you are at peace, but what kind of peace have you? Will you be put off and satisfied with formalities? But there are anxious ones here; God be praised for it. Oh! that there were more; and I believe there are more than I am aware of. Nicodemus-like, seek Christ; but be not like him, tarrying till the shades of night cover you from the sight of your fellow-men. Christ welcomes all anxious ones. Go in prayer. You have His words to Nicodemus. Who made you anxious? The Spirit

of Jesus. First cry of the gospel—Repent, be separate from sin. The gospel saves you *from*, not *in*, your sins. Do you feel your sins clinging to you—your want of the Spirit's blessed influence? What, then, was the subject of Christ's conversation? The serpent—whosoever believeth, look to Jesus.


Timid friends, you lose much—Christ's fellowship, peace of conscience, rewards in glory. You do much harm to yourselves, to Christ's followers—you weaken them—to doubting ones, to the unbeliever; you do not let them see what religion truly is. What place would you prefer? The seat in the Sanhedrim, or to stand, with outstretched arms, at the cross. Now, go and show by your conduct in the world that you are an open disciple of the Lord.

SERMON XIII.

ALONE, AND YET NOT ALONE.

JOHN xvi. 32—"Shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

THESE words occur in one of the most interesting portions of Holy Writ. Our Blessed One had instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He had risen, and, girding himself with a towel, washed the feet of His disciples, and thus deeply imprinted on their hearts a lesson of humility and mutual forbearance. After that, he went forth to Gethsemane, and on the way thither the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of this book are, in general, thought to have been spoken. And now the little band, composed of Jesus and His eleven disciples (Judas was already away, planning with the high priests how the Nazarene might be betrayed), were drawing near to the dark groves of Gethsemane—to that garden so well known to Jesus and His disciples, for oft-times they had resorted thither. There He had spoken as never man spake; there he had, with His disciples, sat down to rest after the wrangling of



scribes and Pharisees in the temple—after the bustling in the streets of Jerusalem; many were the precious words spoken under these trees. For the last time they were now drawing near to that garden. Yes, the disciples would be restored, refreshed, but not the Master; there the servants would sleep, but not the Lord.

Known to Jesus were all the events that were about to take place. He saw them as clearly as He now could look up and see the olive trees on the hill before Him. Just when the eleven had declared their belief in Him, as the one who had come forth from God, He tells them that the hour is now come when they shall be scattered every one to his own. They profess to believe in Jesus, but soon they will leave Him alone with His enemies. Yes; He shall be alone amid the groves of Gethsemane, for there the disciples will sleep; He shall be alone with the multitude, and no kindly eye, no sympathising voice, to comfort Him. He shall be left alone, and yet not alone. Here is a seeming contradiction, but it is soon explained—"The Father is with me." Unseen by human eye, the Son sees Him and feels His presence.

Dear friends, to-day, I would seek to apply these words, not so much to Christ, as to the Christian;

for the disciple may use these words, used by his Master, however lonely he may appear to the world, since Christ hath promised to be with His own, even to the end of the world.

Christians may literally be alone. For example—in times of persecution they have been alone in the desert, the only sound breaking the stillness being the scream of the vulture, and the only object attracting the eye being the bones of men and beasts whitening in the sand. What strange, what painful feelings of solitude then crept over the spirit as the descending sun disappeared beneath the horizon. And many have been alone on the deep: the vessel in which they sailed has sunk amid the roaring billows, and one alone is left, tossed on some floating plank. What solitude; nothing but the sky above, nothing but the dark blue sea around. And many have been alone in the dungeon; around them four blank walls, scarce seen in the darkness, and a stillness, more painful because of the knowledge that there is a busy, bustling world without. In these, and similar scenes, the Christian may appear to be alone, and yet he is not alone. Whether in the desert, the deep, or the dungeon, there is One that is ever with him. The eye may see nought but the whitening bones, the burning sun, and the heavens

like brass; but the eye of faith can see One whose presence makes the desert not only bearable, but enjoyable. The shipwrecked may see nothing but the wide wilderness of water, but the heart tells him he may repose on the boundless ocean of a Saviour's love. The body may be confined in the dungeon, but never the soul; earthly friends may not be permitted to come near, but the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother will come and dwell with the solitary.

But, dear friends, we may be alone though not banished to a desert, cast away on the deep, or confined in a dungeon. The emigrant may feel lonely in the crowded ship; many may have felt solitary in the crowded streets or in the midst of the busiest throng: we are alone, if those around us have no congeniality of feeling with us. The heart is solitary and panting for sympathy when there are none to sympathise. Yet the Christian can and ought to say—“Alone, and yet I am not alone.” He who can comfort in the desert, on the deep, in the dungeon, can and will comfort His followers wherever they be.

There is another solitude that the Christian has to learn how to bear, and it is a burden not easily borne. Is it not one of the happiest earthly scenes to behold a family engaged in evening worship; to

hear all, from the father to the lisping infant, offering praise to God. But, alas! for how short a time does that family circle remain unbroken. Changes come, and, as years go by, another and another chair is vacant. The mother is heard no longer mingling in the evening song of praise; brothers and sisters are separated; and there is left alone the old grey-headed man, whose memory again fills those vacant chairs, and to whose ear fancy brings again the voices of the loved ones mingling in their evening song of praise. But even in the midst of such desolation as this the Christian is not alone; he has more than memory or fancy to support him, he has the staff of the promise to lean upon, and the gospel of Jesus to labour for, and the communion of the Holy One of Israel to cheer his solitude; and, rejoicing in the hope of glory, he is ready to pass through the dark valley without fear, for the Shepherd of Israel is with him.

In the spiritual warfare, the Christian often feels as though he were alone. He is ready to say, I am alone in *such* temptations, in *such* struggles. The heart is weak and wavering, and easily made to shrink from opposition or scorn; but, when the painful struggle, the subtle temptation, is overcome, then he knows that he was not alone, and that, but

for the mercy of God sustaining him, he should have been conquered. Nor are we alone in our joy; when the face of God shines on us, when we feel that our safety is in the munition of rocks, when the Spirit breathes upon our hearts, and "the spices thereof flow out," and by His aid we can cry out, "Abba, Father," then we feel that we are not alone, and with a voice of thankfulness we can praise our ever-present God.

But, friends, have you Christian brothers and sisters who can sympathise with you in every feeling, cheering you in your sorrow, mingling their tears with yours, rejoicing with you in your great joy, singing with you the song of gratitude to a loving Father? Thank Jehovah for the blessing; and seek for some other Christians not so highly favoured, and cheer them in their path to heaven.

Beloved brethren, follow the example of our Elder Brother, and be oft alone with God. There must have been something sweet and soothing in solitude to Jesus, when He arose a great while before day, and went out into a desert place to pray, and not only so, but even spent whole nights on the mountain-side in prayer. Oh! let us follow His example, and oft seek the retirement of the closet, the country road, or the hill-side, that, undisturbed,

we may pour forth our devout breathings in the ear of God, and thus, having communion with Him, become Christ-like. Let us seek to be often alone with our God, that our minds may become calm and peaceful after the wearying anxieties and cankering cares of the world. Let us seek to be often alone with our Saviour, that we may learn to know ourselves better. Mingling with men, we often see their imperfections and forget our own, we can see their sins and excuse our own; but when alone with Jesus we can see what man ought to be, and looking on that perfect standard, our every sin, failing, and transgression stands out with fearful distinctness, and thus is the axe laid to the root of pride, and we are humbled before our God. Be often alone with your God. Let no occupation, no society, keep you from private personal devotion. Let it be the soother of every care, the calmer of every turmoil, the resolver of every doubt. Come to Him, then, just as you are, through Jesus, and the Father will look on you through Him, and no spot, no stain, shall be visible.

In conclusion, I would impress upon your minds that there is a time coming when *you must be alone*. It is when you die—when you enter the spirit world. Poor man, who hast never sought God,

alas! how dreary your journey must be. The world was your home, God you cared not for; nor wearied for communion with Him. You loved the merry-making, the gay society, or perhaps the society of earth's learned ones, but cared not for the hour alone with God. Now friends may crowd around your bed, but they cannot go a step with you beyond this world; you must go alone. Oh! what a thought. *Alone!* and I have never cared to be alone for one single hour, unless with book, work, or study. I must die *alone*. Oh! that I could begin to live my life over again. Oh! that I had spent more time alone with God. And now, in darkness, total darkness, I must go alone on a road I have never travelled before. And whither does that road lead? To those who are not followers of Jesus, to those who have not looked to the bleeding sacrifice on Calvary, that dark road leads to utter darkness, to ever deepening despair, to the second death. But, oh! brother, sister in the Lord, how different all this will be to you; you have oft been alone with your God, you have oft been enabled joyously to exclaim—I was alone, and yet not alone. Have you any need to fear death? No; it is a going home. Were you accustomed, like your Master, to rise a great while before day, that you might enjoy communion with

your God? How sweet now to be going home to be for ever with the Lord; you have to curb the longing desire you have to be away with your God.

“ You leave the world without a tear,
Save for the friends you hold so dear;
To heal their sorrows, Lord, descend,
And to the friendless prove a friend.”

Then every racking pain is welcomed as a messenger telling that the time is drawing near; every restless night tells you that the time is fast approaching when there shall be no night.

Once more, let me ask, have you often sought to be alone with your God? Do you love the hour of solitary communion with your God better than any other, or is it a weariness to you; if the latter, are you then in a fit state to be for ever with the Lord? It is not the bright-robed angels, it is not the six-winged seraphs, it is not the anthems of the angel choir rolling through the vault of heaven, it is not the society of crowned saints, that gives happiness in heaven. It is the presence of the Lord. And are you fit for His presence when you care not to spend an hour alone with Him here? Oh! be wise, be wise; seek Him now through Christ, that ye may be with Him for ever.

SERMON XIV.

ASSURANCE.

2 COR. v. 1—"For we know, that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

SUSPENSE—how painful is the feeling! In the most trivial matters it is not easily borne; but in the more important affairs connected with this world, it taxes the mind to its utmost limit of endurance, and sometimes puts it so much to the stretch that at last it snaps. But turn from earthly to heavenly things, and we should expect that the pain of suspense would be a hundred-fold increased. If a man, about his temporal affairs, may have his mind deeply moved; then, about eternal things, surely his whole soul will be excited, and he will have no rest till the matter is settled. Alas! how far is this supposition from the truth. How seldom we find any with a "sure hope;" and who can say, with regard to the Saviour, "My Beloved is mine, and I am thine."

This indifference with regard to eternal things is the more startling, as every day tells us of the uncertainty of earthly things; and yet we fail to learn the lessons taught us so solemnly on every hand. We are content to move along the stream of time, quite indifferent as to the end of our course. Is this acting with prudence or common sense? As your friend, and as your minister, let me now press this subject upon your notice.

Do you believe this Book? Then you know assuredly that at the end of life's journey there are only two alternatives—lost or saved; saved in heaven or lost in hell. Oh! fearful alternatives. Are you willing to go on, day by day, without any certainty as to which shall be yours? But *can* there be certainty on such a subject? Oh! give me the certainty of heaven; give me the consciousness that my sins are pardoned, mine iniquities blotted out in the blood of the Lamb, and I care not for all the vicissitudes of life, I care not for all the sneers of the world; and, in the midst of all the turmoils and disturbances of the world, I shall have a calm, a settled peace, which all the storms of earth cannot shake. Is not this the feeling of each one of you?

But, you may be asking, can such a thing as an indisputable title to the home in heaven be obtained?

Was ever man of woman born certain of heaven? Was there ever a man or a woman in the world, who was a guilty sinner like yourselves, and yet was conscious of heaven being their home. I tell you there have been many, many who have journeyed through the world, singing triumphantly, "Heaven is my home," and able to say, "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*" Now, I affirm that this certainty you may have; nay, that you ought to have it.

In such an important matter it would be wrong in you to trust to my word, and in me to expect you to do so. But let us bring it to the law and to the testimony. Look at the text before you—"For we know;" is not that certainty? The apostle does not say we hope, or we trust, but we know. Again, he says, Rom. viii. 38, 39, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord;" and, 2 Tim. i. 12, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." See also, 1 John iii. 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life;" and the words of Jesus himself, John x. 27, 28, "My sheep hear my

voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Turn to Psalm xxiii. 1, "The Lord is my shepherd;" and in verse 4, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." Is not this certainty?

It were easy for me, dear friends, to proceed, and, from innumerable portions of Scripture, show you the doctrine of assurance, as it is called. It is a doctrine taught, not in a few places, but frequently, directly and indirectly, throughout the Bible. I call upon you, then, to meditate seriously upon it.

I cannot understand those who appear to think that a doubting state, a state of anxiety and trembling, is better than that of confidence in God, calm certainty in Jehovah's love. If they mean that anxiety is better than no anxiety in the unconverted or backslider—fear and trembling better than open, bold iniquity or deadness in sin, then I understand them. It is surely better that a man should be groaning in the utmost pain than have no pain, because he has no feeling. But that pain should be better than health, that sorrow should be better than joy, that endless doubts and questionings should be better

than basking in the sunshine of God's favour, these things I cannot understand.

But you may be asking, Do none enter heaven who have not assurance? Now, this is a question I do not like to answer; because, in answering it, I can only give my opinion. I cannot put my finger on this and that portion of the Word, and show you how one and another were taken to the house not made with hands. Still none need be discouraged, for I can tell you of instances of weak faith—Peter sinking; the man crying, "I believe, help thou mine unbelief;" the leper praying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

How is assurance to be obtained? Look to Jesus. Meditate on the work of redemption—its greatness, its sufficiency, its freeness. Cast yourself, with all your sins, on Jesus; trust in His faithfulness. Never lose clear views of justification by faith. Faith is the receiver; it is nothing in itself. Give assurance to the world of your faith, by your progress in holiness. Why should we strive to obtain assurance? Because it is more honouring to God. It gives us a joy no change can take away; it gives us a power and liberty in acting that others have not; we are better able to recommend Christ to others. Have you obtained it? Be grateful, and walk close with

God. Do you desire it, and have not yet attained it? Are you quite willing to resign all for Jesus? Is there no sin dimming the eye of the soul? Rest not till you can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am His."

SERMON XV.

“JESUS WEPT.”

JOHN xi. 35—“Jesus wept.”

.OFTEN have I meditated upon this, the shortest verse in the Bible; often have I alluded to it, but I have always shrunk from making it the subject of a discourse. In this you can easily sympathise with me, for the subject is so sacred that it seems like sacrilege to preach upon it; and so it would be in reality, if all I wanted was to gain your attention and interest your minds. May God now enable me to preach with the purest motives, and grant you to have your hearts quickened with love to Jesus in listening.

Many times have I asked myself, Why did Jesus weep? I know why He groaned in Gethsemane; I know what caused His pangs on Calvary; it was the burden of sin pressing on His soul, it was the hiding of His Father's countenance. But why did He weep at the grave of Lazarus? and not there only, but we have it recorded in another place that He wept, and

that in one of the brightest hours (humanly speaking) of His sojourn on earth—when loud hosannas were echoing and re-echoing from the sides of Olivet. Before Him was the city, the holy city, Jerusalem; around Him, on every hand, bright countenances; palm branches waving, and His path strewn with garments, as though He had been a conqueror entering his capital after a glorious victory; yet, at this time, tears filled His eyes; He was in the deepest sorrow. Why? To His mind, another scene was present. His eye could look beneath the surface and see, in the hearts of many around, the root of that which would bring forth blood, distress, anguish on earth, and eternal wailings in hell. He saw the unbelief of the Jew springing up and bearing its fruit; He could hear, instead of the hosannas that were then ringing along the sides of Olivet, the cries of “Crucify him, crucify him,” that were soon to fill the judgment-hall; He could see not only the bright faces around Him, but the frowning, contemptuous countenances of Pharisees and Sadducees; He could see Calvary, and its shame and death; beyond these, He could see Jerusalem like a furnace. On every hand blood, blood, crosses, crosses; and beyond this also, He saw and understood what it is to reject the Son of God, the *only* Saviour—to spurn,

to neglect what God has provided. In short, Jesus knew, in a way that no man on earth can understand, how inseparably hell and unbelief are joined together, and His wail was, "Ye would not come unto me."

Now, I have dwelt thus on what took place on Olivet, because, I think, it throws light on our text, and from it we shall be enabled to answer, with satisfaction to ourselves, the question—Why did Jesus weep at the grave of Lazarus? It was because of the unbelief of those who were to be witnesses of the mighty miracle.

We have in the opening of the chapter the sickness of Lazarus, and the touching message sent to Jesus—"He whom thou lovest is sick"—and the strange fact, that Jesus, loving Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus, yet remained two days in the same place. Now, know why he did so. It was that their faith might not only be tried, but strengthened, and become triumphant.

In the interview with Martha, we see the trembling of her faith—too weak to grasp the promise when given by Jesus. On Mary, we find that grief had taken a deeper hold than on her sister. She mourns that her Lord had not been present when her brother was sick. She weeps, and the Jews weep, and no trust is placed on Him—that loving Jesus, who

again and again speaks words to strengthen their faith. And then, in the most solemn manner at the open tomb, He speaks unto the Father, and tells us in that prayer what all was for—"That they may BELIEVE that thou hast sent me." Here notice the importance of faith on Jesus.

From the 45th and 46th verses we learn that some believed on Him; "but some went their ways to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done." And what was the consequence? Council was assembled, and vigorous steps taken to seize and kill the Messiah.

Now when we ask ourselves why did Jesus weep, let us, dear friends, look beyond the tears of the weeping sisters. Soon, Jesus knew, a living Lazarus would gladden their hearts. But look and see the awful hardness, obstinacy, and unbelief of the heart. They—the Jews and their rulers—could not deny the miracles that were wrought: "This man doeth many miracles," was their own testimony. Some of them had heard His solemn prayer at the tomb of Lazarus, and seen the dead becoming alive; and yet they rejected Jesus, and thus added fearfully to their condemnation. In some slight degree, my dear friends, you can conceive how the soul of Jesus was agonized, when this, His mightiest miracle of mercy

and love, was so perverted by unbelief as to bring down a *curse*. Little wonder that "Jesus wept!"

Let us now then try to learn something of the nature of *unbelief*. Unbelief is the most God-dishonouring and soul-destroying of all sins. When I say God-dishonouring, I do not mean that God can in any measure be dishonoured by man, let him act as he will. Just as well might we try to blot out the sun by the breath of our nostrils, as to dishonour God by anything we do, say, or think; but we may hide ourselves from the sun, or shut our eyes and not see its shining. So, when I say that it is God-dishonouring, I use the language of man, meaning that it hides the honour of God from the soul, so that we are not able to appreciate the honour of God.

For a moment consider what unbelief would make God to our souls. *A liar*. Does not your soul shrink from the very thought. And yet it is what, in reality, unbelief calls God. He says to Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they *believe* me?" God says sin is bitter, unbelief says it is sweet; God says it is madness, unbelief says it is wisdom; God says, now is the accepted time, unbelief says, to-morrow; God says, this is my beloved Son, hear Him, but un-

belief turns away and listens to the bustle of the world or the busy whisperings of the heart, instead of the Word of God. It scorns the love of God: God is Love. I cannot enlarge upon this in words; for its length and breadth, its height and depth, are infinite, so that neither your mind nor mine can grasp it; but I point you to a loving Jesus, a living Jesus—I hold Him up before you—Jesus on earth, from the manger to the cross—Jesus in heaven, the High Priest on the throne. This Jesus, the Well-beloved, is the gift of the Father: unbelief turns away from it—this gift of *love* and *mercy*.

Again, it is the most soul-destroying sin. It keeps the soul from the only sin-remedy. It suffers not the blood-drops of Jesus to be applied to the guilty conscience. Anything or everything it will allow, but the blood of Jesus. Any or every remedy may be applied, but that which was proposed in the counsels of Eternity—the only *one* that can cure the diseased soul.

Let your souls be awed, when you thus come and see Christ melted with sorrow. It is affecting to see a man weep, and especially a great man. Think ye it could be a trifle that moved the Son of God to tears! Then, as in thought you gaze on the tear-drops of Jesus, learn the value of a soul, and how

terrible its loss must be. Learn, too, a lesson of hope from these same tear-drops. Dear friends, learn the willingness of Jesus to receive you, when He could thus weep over those who were going away from Him in unbelief. While your soul trembles when you think of the awful doom of a lost soul, rejoice—rejoice that you know of Christ's willingness to be your personal Saviour.

Now, I put it to each soul. What, to-day, will your conduct produce in the heart of Jesus? You know He is willing to take you now, here, and just as you are. He will rejoice to receive you. What, oh man or woman, will keep thee back? Children of the King, you may be fellow-workers with Christ. Think of the honour of drying the Redeemer's tears, by consecrating your own soul, and bringing others to Him.

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